ARMAGEDDON

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A TALE OF LOVE, WAR, AND INVENTION.

BY

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"THE STORY OF AB," "A MAN AND A WOMAN,"
"AN ODD SITUATION," ETC.

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CHAPTER I.

THE REDDENING HORIZON.

In the first years of the present century the nations were in turmoil. The nineteenth century had flickered out in something like racial warfare, and, while there had been an adjustment, while there was nominal peace throughout the hemispheres, there was an undercurrent of fear, and mighty preparations were making among the nations which were dominant. The whole world was afoot and girding itself for threatening war.

The wonder was, not so much that such a condition should exist as that there should have been maintained so long even a sort of semi-equilibrium in international relations. When the Spanish-American war ended all points of contact between the nations were inflamed. Something must happen. It is true

SPELLING BEE AT PRESS CLUB.

Manuscript and Poster Exhibits and Other Interesting Things.

Spelling contests, manuscript and poster exhibits and an interesting talk by Dr. Carlos Montezuma were the features of the Press Club's "convocation" last evening. Members of the club, their wives, sisters and friends to the number of 200 filled the rooms to examine and admire the exhibit loaned by Charles Scribner's Sons, and many participated in the contests. Herbert W. Fay, editor of the De Kalb Review, exhibited a collection of Lincoln photographs, many of which have no duplicates. Denslow and Leyendecker were represented in characteristic posters. The Scribner collection embraced Kipling manuscripts and illustrations, proofs and cuts of noted stories and originals of illustrations by some famous artists.

Preceding the spelling contests Fredorick Boyd Stevenson gave "The Sandy Holler Spelling Bee." The written spelling match, in which thirty-nine words were given, was won by Alexis J. Colman. Six contestants were tied for second prize. The old-fashioned oral spelling match was won by W. V. Smith, who outlasted forty good spellers.

The Cypher Club will entertain members at the Press Club Saturday evening.

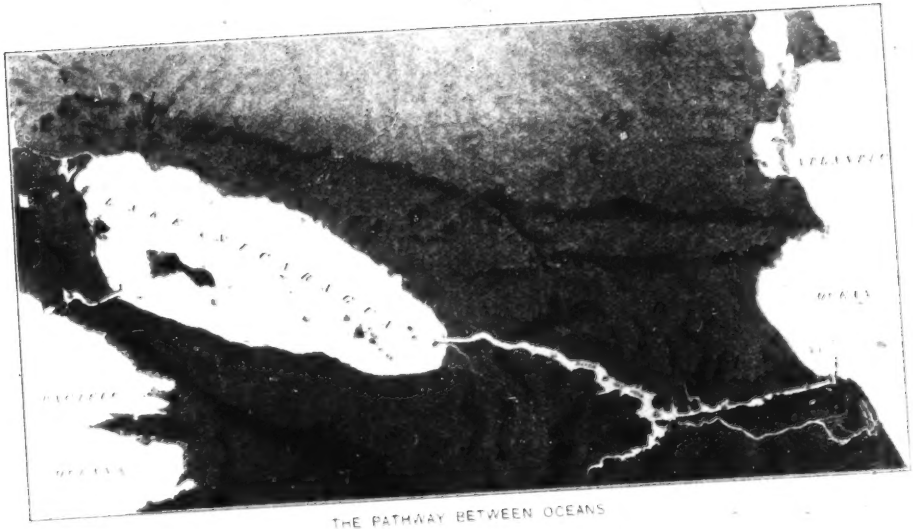
To W. V. Smith and his wife, who was so clever as to all spelling in the Search Prize Club contest (She's probably even cleverer than he, but this is confidential) this book is given as a testimonial of their learned prowess.

For the Prize Club,

Stanley Waterloo.

Additionally and personally I'm glad that I may add friend to mine now.

Stanley Waterloo.



THE PATHWAY BETWEEN OCEANS

that nothing absolutely definite as to the future connections and alliances of the governments of the world had yet been determined upon, but the air was weighted. There had, so far, been no formulated alliance of the Anglo-Saxons; there had, as yet, been devised no offsetting European combination, but the political atmosphere of the world had that oppressiveness which precedes a thunderstorm, and thoughtful statesmen knew that the storm must come and that its lightning-strokes would obliterate forces and change maps.

The attitude of the Americans was optimistic, with a readiness. There was a living leaven in the lump, the leaven of two hundred thousand young men spread evenly throughout all the states, who had responded when the call to arms came in 1898. They had been victorious and were made much of; their friends and neighbors regarded them highly; they were patriotic and had much to say, and they made public opinion; they had smelled gunpowder; they had faced battle-shot and fever; they had left comrades buried in shallow trenches; they had learned what war was, and, after a little rest and much glory, were not disinclined for war again, in a contingency.

Otherwise, America was just about as it had been before the war with Spain. It is true that material and military conditions were somewhat changed. We had made Cuba an independent republic; Porto Rico we had simply annexed as a strong outpost, the government of the island being but an incident. Over in the Pacific, Hawaii had come in as a matter of course, during the war, and we had utilized the Philippines, because that had become for us a national and international necessity. The Pacific had been bridged; to us belonged the conveniences of the highway from San Francisco to Hongkong; we had taken all we needed but only what we needed.

Not a nation in the world but at last, and for the first time, realized the attitude of the great republic. It had fought and defeated its overweening and over-religious adversary, had banished that non-progressive force to its home provinces and had then, to the astonishment of the world, abstained from seizing upon all of the near and remote possessions within its grasp. It had in effect said to the other nations of the world:

"I have more than scouted across my continent. I have occupied even its western shore

and bred my children there. They, east and west, are among the great thinking, acting peoples of the world, and must have all due rights and privileges. Across the broadest of oceans, the eldest of empires is threatened with division and, whether divided or not, it is about to make available as a business prize to the advanced nations of the world its vast commercial privileges. I have built a trade bridge—arranged a row of stepping-stones—across the Pacific; I must maintain the station I have taken and have the means of defending my highways and my byways.

"I need the facilities for best fighting here and there,—anywhere about the globe where it may become necessary for me to fight, but I grasp no more than that which is enough for my single purpose, and I have no thought of seeking to seize more until my people shall overflow my own broad land. Then they must do as best they can. Then they must do as their Viking ancestors did. Then they must have it in them, or fail to have it in them, to say to what degree might is right. For the present, they have demanded nothing and sought nothing, but to implace themselves and do it well and strongly upon such points

about the globe as may make it somewhat easier in life for their great-great-grandchildren. Should the occasion come sooner for the utilization of these vantage-places so much the better for us of this age who are thinking out this thing and who have a decent degree of readiness for any sort of fight to-day."

Meanwhile the idea of an Anglo-Saxon alliance had grown and broadened. It had been fostered by thinking men of both Great Britain and America. Those who could best foresee the future of races favored it, and those who had only clannish memories in mind opposed it. But a tentative alliance, at least, it was evident, must come.

Of course latter opposition to the growing spirit of Anglo-Saxon alliance was at once manifested by a large number of "American citizens" possessed of fine lungs, foreign birth or teachings, world-reforming ideas, and great flux of words. It was almost droll, but the amiable American laws gave to each of these eloquent men of other than American traditions a vote, and votes secure election and Congressmen want to be elected again. Our school books, too, had long taught our children to think of Englishmen as enemies and,

especially, in the country, the ancient prejudice somewhat prevailed. These influences had a certain potency.

There was exerted, also, in opposition to the contemplated alliance, informal though the alliance might be, one force more potent than all others put together, that exerted by the element composed of those who exploit themselves as "The hereditary foes of England," a buoyant, illogical and too impressionable class, led often astray by the more foxy, self-seeking and overtopping representatives of their own race. Very well did these leaders understand, though they didn't mention it, that their own reasonably regular and more or less full and easily gained incomes were in danger if there were to be an abandonment of the race enmity brought across the Atlantic to be engrafted, if possible, upon the American people.

They did their work cleverly, the agitators; they were glib talkers and their followings had long been organized. A few adroit American office seekers whimpered and whined before them and cast their lot with them for a time, but only for a time. There is no room here to tell the story of the agitator who had lived

so well for years, nor of his following in the lower grades of American politicians. When the great culminating wave came they were all swept into the movement, and—let it be said to the credit of the Irishman, that when the time came, he sprang into the ranks and fought for his adopted country. The average congressman or other politician whose course the agitator had influenced was found ordinarily among the home guards.

Of course, with the Anglo Saxon combination in sight, the European nations were agitated by doubts. They were not quite a brotherly group, for heretofore, as chances fell, they had fed upon each other. Naturally, as facing the combination the Russian should come first. He is the great growing, creeping - southward - and - eastward threatening force. Naturally, the Russian wanted no combination of America with Great Britain. He was inclined to make much, just then, of his skin-deep friendship with the United States, for there was India. It must be said of this Slav, too, that, notwithstanding what has happened and is to be here related, he is a force great in the present and perhaps to be far greater in the future. He is millions; his

priestly domination is being regulated and modernized by Tolstoi and other thinkers of Russia; he learns languages more readily than does any one of any other race, and he fights well in a sort of kismet way.

It may be possible that the Slav, developing on new lines, is to be the successor of the Anglo-Saxon in a material and philosophic way, his strong spirit, enforced by militarism and its new-born religion, may yet direct the affairs of the world, but whatever his future may be, the day of the Slav has not yet come. He but struggled toward his triumph or his fate, as the event might prove,—as was natural. The Russian Empire moved toward the Anti-Anglo-Saxon alliance.

That the German Emperor should have been even tempted toward such an alliance was a thing extraordinary. It was strange, it was remarkable and uncouth, an unconscionable thing, that he should be for a moment with the Slav and the Latin in this combination, though there are other strange inconsistencies in the world's affairs. The land which gave birth to the founder of Christianity bows to the prophet Mahomet, and the

temples of India know not the gentle religion of Buddha.

Why, the Emperor of Germany ought to have been proud and defiant in the matter and, since he liked to pose, to have posed as the dean of the Anglo-Saxons! Of course, we are all Teutons. Ancient Germany was to Great Britain as Great Britain is to America. In the area of acres including what is now consolidated Germany, lies the land from which upsprang the fellows who made trouble for Cæsar—there was one Vergincetorix who was a beauty—and they were Teutons who, in the fury of seizing and populating land, forced themselves northwestward until they reached what we call the English Channel, and then, with Hengist and Horsa and the rest, flung over to an island and found Angles and wolves and seized upon the land washed by the Gulf Stream and made a new race of their own, the race that broadened the Christian religion, the race that has peopled with strong men the wild places of the world; the race that did rather a neat thing at Waterloo; the race which, when its sons fighting among themselves, as in the Cromwellian wars, or the war of the Revolution, or the American

Civil war, has always done exceedingly well, and under stress too. But the German Emperor and some of his advisers failed, at an important moment, to see the logical attitude for his country.

As for France, her attitude was not unexpected save to the ignorant, those who, having read old school books alone, still dreamed that France and Russia were natural allies of the United States, regardless of nature, training, belief and blood. As a matter of fact, and very consistently, in heart, France had been with Spain throughout the Spanish-American war. Firstly, and most dominant, religious traditions and influences trended that way; secondly, financial relations, and lastly, blood and family relations. A somewhat like explanation would apply to Austria, though with that unhappy empire the time for change and experiment had come. Here too, blood and religion counted, and, in addition, complications were such that war with the outsider was at least less bad than the civil war impending.

It was so with Italy, though in a lesser degree. As for Spain, all the desperate vengeance-seeking venom which could be bottled

up in a proud and belittled nation, was hers, and Portugal was with her, as a matter of course, racially and religiously. The tottering Austrian and the beaten inhabitant of the southwestern European peninsula were together. The Anti-Anglo-Saxon combination, perfect save for the grumbling of a portion of the German people, began to assume a definite form. The great men who organized it were men of earnestness and power; men of weakening race though individually strong, recognizing the decadence, and struggling persistently against the evanishment of racial potency which some inexorable law had decreed.

Great Britain, the isolated, recognized the situation. She fostered—and not altogether in selfishness, be it said—her closer growing relations with the United States. And in the recognized impending emergency her liberally governed colonies drew nearer to her. There was arming in Australia and in Canada, and there were significant movements of bodies of troops in India and on the Nile. Yet the Foreign Office was reticent, and the Premier blandly informed all questioners that Great Britain was at peace. But ever, as in

America, was heard the sound of hammer upon rivet in the shipyards, and ever, day and night, fires flashed forth redly from the foundries.

As the statesman walked, the earth heaved underneath his feet, though hardly enough to unbalance or really frighten him. He wondered and pondered and guessed, as did all thinking men, but hardly conceived the magnitude of the coming earthquake. Never in the history of the world's political events were those directing such affairs more doubtful and perplexed. Would the almost inevitable war be racial? Would it be religious? Would it be simply political with a view to divide the territory of the weak?

Men had not taken into consideration Appleton and the Wild Goose. In this circumstance there was nothing remarkable, for none had ever heard of either.

CHAPTER II.

DAVID APPLETON.

This is to tell of certain events, some preceding and some growing out of the situation as outlined in the last chapter, particularly as they affected, and ultimately were affected by, my friend, David Appleton.

While statesmen and princes brooded and struggled over problems of public policy and craft, while navies fretted the seas, and armies shook the earth as they marched and countermarched, we two unknown men, encamped on an Illinois prairie, held counsel over our special perplexities, meanwhile looking out on the broad world with curious eyes, studying with varying thoughts and passions the strokes and parryings of the nations.

David Appleton had been my classmate at college. He had been, truth to say, most unjustly unpopular with me and my group there, because of his fellowship with algebra, too surpassing facility in calculus, his intimate

and affectionate relations with conic sections, while at the same time, he was well regarded because of his assistance in enabling his weaker brethren to pass, though totteringly, the examinations in those studies. Before our graduation he and I became warm friends. Among those uprising with the great events of the last year, Appleton has been a looming figure and I have been his associate and assistant.

It was not merely as a mathematician, but to some extent as an inventor that Appleton excelled, even in his college days. It was he who contrived the charming system of pulleys by which, one night, we raised an amiable cow and left her tethered upon the roof of the chapel building, and it was he who devised a cut-off for the gas mains a hundred yards from the university. The gift of invention grew with him after he engaged in the struggle with the world. He invented something about a locomotive and made money. There came a time, though, when he abandoned his office and regular business and was not seen among his friends for months. Upon my return home from Nicaragua, where I had been with the Canal Commission, I was making vain in-

quiries for Appleton when one day he sent for me.

The explanation of my friend's absorption is not a long story. He was experimenting and promoting an invention of his own which he declared surpassed everything of its kind conceived in the past, and, furthermore, as he confessed later, he was in love. In each enterprise he was, as he said, "up to his neck." The outcome of the love affair depended, to an extent, upon the success of the invention. But what was most important, as I look back now, was that, upon the outcome of his invention depended in a measure at least, as subsequently appeared, the location of certain boundary lines defining the mastership of the great nations of the world.

It was Appleton's sudden reversion to our old association, the flaming up of the former friendship, which appealed to me most strongly. I had thought often of him but had not imagined that he had me as much in mind. Yet he had, in a way, been as sentimental as I. We had drifted apart, and now we came together again in Chicago. We were more comfortable because of it.

I rather distinctly approved of the lank,

brown fellow, as he left his chair and walked back and forth with his hands in his pockets, when, one day, he fully opened his heart to me. There was a clean healthy look about him. Here we were, over thirty years of age, each of us, and the skin lay close and smooth upon his face, while his eyes were as clear as when, at ten years of age, he had chased a red squirrel along the wood-bordered rail fence of some Wisconsin farm. His body was as healthy as his mind.

I cannot tell, and I suppose no one can—for I should know if anyone—the story of the development of Appleton's mind after he left college surcharged with the sort of information which might aid in great work, or end in nothing. He was simply a man with a big brain of the constructive sort. I know very little, even now, of his early business career, of his successes or his failures, his hopes or his disappointments. I do not know how it came that he fumbled his way through to that device, which, sold to the railroads, left him with twenty-five thousand or thirty-five thousand dollars to the good. Neither can I tell what vaulting ambition was in him or from what trend of thought, begotten of his

work, came to him broader design for more hazardous but more splendid conquest. He was always reticent in this regard, but, through an association, which, because of a host of things of which I will tell later, became longer continued and closer than is usual with most men, there came material for doubtless nearly correct conclusions as to his quality. Unbounded ambition he had, unlimited pluck he had and, withal, an imagination and fancy and dreaminess which made him sometimes almost womanly. Pretty good combination that, for what we call a man, wasn't it?

"It's all queer," he said, "But I think you'll comprehend it. We were pretty close together in college, weren't we? Though we weren't so very close together socially or in the ways of the college fraternities and all that sort of thing, still, somehow, we always understood and helped each other, in a way, and since the old studying time, though we have corresponded indifferently, there has seemed to be a connecting link between us. Maybe you do not comprehend it as I do, but I hope the thing is mutual. Anyhow I have thought that, perhaps, if in some strait you needed help, you would send for me. I, at least, have

felt that way toward you. It has come in my way first. As a beginning of what I have to say to you I will summarize the situation.

"I have succeeded, after a fashion, as an inventor. I have some thousands of dollars. I have a great enterprise in which I shall need an assistant who will be a friend and confidant. There are labors aside from the sheer thought to be productive and there is manual work to be done. I must have a brother to help me in a legitimate and straightforward conduct of the enterprise. There are money considerations. My success from a worldly point of view is involved, and that affects my life at its core as it touches the possibilities of the future with the woman I have told you about. I suppose I must be an isolated person. Anyhow, you are the only man in the world to whom I felt I could appeal.

"I have abandoned my regular business, which was successful, and am working upon a device—a sort of a machine for lifting great weights into the air, and holding them there without support from below. I have a new thought—an idea of entirely new application in this connection, and since I abandoned myself to this particular undertaking there have

arisen new difficulties and perplexities, but I am right in my idea. Will you help me? As to your helpful ability, so far as my purpose goes, it largely consists of your nerve and perfect understanding of me. As to that, I've already made up my mind. I can offer you some money, enough at least to make you safe, and of course you will prosper should the undertaking succeed, as I firmly believe it will. You will have plenty of hard work, an opportunity for the exhibition of your friendship, and a chance to meet infinite bodily peril. You will share with me at last what comes to the large gambler upon a large scale, whether he be one in cards or stocks or in the broader and better game where minds are strained to some purpose, where even the future affairs of nations may be affected. Probably this sharing will be to your good, but you must take your chances. The details I will tell you. After that, you can determine. I know that I have thought of what no other man has conceived, and have done that which has not been done before."

All this and more Appleton said, and that night I could think and dream of nothing but

him and his enthusiasm. The next day he piloted me out through the western verge of the city and to the prairie where he was at work.

It was a quiet place, on the western bank of the Des Plaines River. Looking toward the water one saw the gracious outlines of the waving elms and strong-limbed oaks which lined the shallow stream, and toward the north, west and south, the prairie rolled, broken in the distance occasionally by an orchard-surrounded farmhouse, a greener island in the sea of green.

From rough boards Appleton had built a long wide shed, or rather barn, for it was lofty, and in this his treasure was enclosed, most of the room being used as a workshop. A small space at the south end of the building had been fitted up as an office and living rooms, and from this end a rude piazza extended but a few feet over the unbroken prairie sod.

We passed through the rooms directly to the space provided for the machine. The long room was open on one side, being fitted with great sliding doors on the west, and there was a framework outside resembling somewhat the platform of a boat house. It was all

strange and new to me, and I was interested when Appleton proceeded, directly and simply, to the explanation of his invention in terms suited to the comprehension of a layman.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE PRAIRIE.

It's pretty hard work, trying to tell about Appleton's invention. He had engaged the services of some clever fellows, all of one family, I think, and they were working for him and were of great service to us, to the end of our stay on the prairie, though not confidentially so as was an odd fellow who came later. I suppose that I am not a good person to tell what the invention was. I can only do so in a general way and within my limitations.

The main feature was a great torpedo-shaped thing with an aluminum exterior. The thickness of this aluminum covering was a matter of constant and violent debate between Appleton and me, after I became identified with the enterprise. With no weight to speak of, it meant vast buoyancy; with a greater weight it meant less buoyancy and more disaster following the inevitable experimental alighting. Appleton, after much thought and numberless experiments, had decided to take

chances with this buoyant thing, to make it as light as possible, and to rely upon the utilization of the vast force he had at his command, and which was now being first tried,—in driving in a certain direction something floating in a surrounding the same above as below, something entirely immersed in one element. Appleton had gathered together as far as he could, the forces necessary for the accomplishment of his work. He had stored electricity; he had reservoirs of compressed and liquified air; he had wonderful contrivances for the reduction of friction and the reduction of weight as compared with force. I was doubtful at first, but I've long had faith in aerial navigation—I've always had since a talk years ago with the most famous of living inventors, when he gave his views on the subject, and I saw plainly that Appleton's "Lifting machine," as he modestly called it, looked toward some new venture in aerial experiments. Up to this time I had felt no grounded and established faith in Appleton. He was, I had thought, too much of a dreamer. But, dreamer though he was, he had sense and he had the accretion of much learning in his short but full years of work and study. What other

men had learned and what he had devised himself were his. He knew the quality of the problem. The famous inventor had said that night I so well remembered:

"Given the power, with sufficiently less relatively of the carried weight at present necessary to produce the power, power to rise above the earth and maintain a fixed position is an accomplished fact. At present, we do not produce a machine which can be connected with some gas-lifted thing, and which has not at the same time such weight as will offset its driving power. What is lacking to make a dirigible thing floating in the air is something with vast power of propulsion and weight so light that the weight is not a counterbalance to the effect produced."

As a wondering lad I had heard this statement from a source which commanded respect, and now I saw clearly that the inventor had, as usual with him, told the simple, genius-born truth. Appleton had some idea. He had sought something which would have strong propulsive machinery of the lightness desired. He had succeeded, after a fashion.

Aluminum is a good thing. It was worth

eighteen dollars a pound a while ago. It is worth a dollar or two a pound now, because some clever young fellows of Cleveland, fresh from college, invented a new process, and the metal which lies in every clay bank is now given to the world for a moderate price which will be lower still. Appleton's main reliance for the initial lifting—shall I call it floating medium?—was made of aluminum. He had taken the Cleveland men into his confidence, and in that city the machine was practically built, though put together in the prairie barn where I now beheld it. The thing was about seventy feet long and fifteen feet across and it looked, as said, like a torpedo. The metal was as thin, and strong at the same time, as anything of its kind could be. Filled with gas, it would float of itself with quite an upward pulling power in addition. Hugged close to it, attached rigidly and barely lifted when let loose with the torpedo-shaped thing was a sort of boat or carrier, and in this was the powerful driving force upon which Appleton relied. Here the motive power, which I must not too clearly specify, comes in again. I cannot describe the device; I am a bungler at it, anyway, and, in any case, I have no right

to describe it with accuracy, but I do know this, that the force was altogether of the air, although Appleton was experimenting much with electricity, too. The manner in which, when Appleton touched certain buttons, the lifting or the forward driving or the backward-putting screw blades revolved, was a spectacle worth seeing. The steering apparatus was such that Appleton could make the device go up or down at his pleasure, and he had at his command such enormous resources in the way of driving power that he could, under certain favorable conditions, make it go this way or that way at his command. Of course, all this presupposed the calmest weather. There had been other inventions of the sort almost as good in most ways, it seemed to me, except for the new motive power here employed. The thing once lifted up into the air did much that Appleton hoped for. When a wind came, though, "things were different," as Appleton said.

It doesn't matter. From the moment I saw that machine and heard Appleton tell about it, I had but one ambition—to help it along, aid as I might in perfecting it, and be lifted up over that green prairie in it. I resolved to

join the earnest man's working force, and stand by him to the end. I became an enthusiastic dreamer with him. Dreamers make the world progress, after all. Ninety-nine out of the hundred fail. The hundredth becomes one of the world's exclamation points. Certainly here was a chance.

Within a week I had moved out to the big barn-like structure on the prairie, and was as absorbed in the new idea as Appleton himself. There were difficulties worth overcoming.

There came trouble. I shall not give details, but there were the usual troubles of inventors. We could never, proud as we were of our machine, quite adapt ourselves to the winds of the upper air. They were too much addicted to carrying us away with them. We, necessarily, accepted the situation and drifted downward, with such gradual slope as we could command, to the peaceful prairie, always within a mile or two of home, and one of us went over to the cabin and made arrangements for bringing back the paraphernalia. The two horses which we kept in the old shed outside the big building had become accustomed to dragging the great invention back and forth.

They were not harnessed as horses of the fire departments of great cities may be, in a moment, but they were pretty nearly that way. They knew instinctively when disaster had come and almost snorted in their stalls when they saw O'Brien—whom I will tell of later—coming in to hitch them to the old wagon with its derrick all ready for use. They knew that they had to drag that preposterous torpedo thing back again to its resting place in the big building. Don't tell me that a horse hasn't intelligence. Those horses, somewhat indignantly, entered into the spirit of the great struggle. I was worried, but nothing affected Appleton. That big brute, with that big head of his, knew that he owned a coming more or less practicable air traverser and went ahead stolidly. Really, I was the sufferer. Really, I am the one man who ought to have a medal of some sort, but Appleton is getting most of the praise, and I am, as I tell him, nobody. However, it doesn't matter.

One day—a day of hard work—when we reached our haven at night, we found sitting at ease on our stoop—I suppose I should say piazza, but that sounds too ambitious—a stranger. He was young, broad of shoulder,

deep of chest and a trifle below the medium height. He arose as we approached and introduced himself as O'Brien, "Leander O'Brien, son of old man O'Brien, of South Halsted Street."

Appleton, looking at the newcomer thoughtfully, seemed to remember vaguely the ancestral O'Brien, and seated himself on the steps to talk with the visitor. I seated myself as well, and examined Leander O'Brien at leisure. He had a queer hunch to his shoulders at times and, when enforcing a proposition, a defiantly appealing turning outward of his hands which was most effective. His hair was cut short and so was his coat. His eyes were of the watchful sort, but steady. They were gray and the lashes and eyebrows were not well defined, but the general aspect of the face was that suggesting a combination of faithful follower and aggressive citizen. The young man seemed a sort of blithesome fighting animal.

"Are youse the fellows getting up a flying machine?" he demanded of Appleton.

Appleton told his questioner that we were probably the men he sought, although we were not flying much just now.

"Are youse the man who helped my father, old man O'Brien?"

"I am David Appleton."

"Can I go with youse?" implored O'Brien. Then thrusting his hat far back on his head, he announced, looking at first one then the other of us:

"Youse must take me; I'll go anyway!"

I can't help it—I must digress about that hat. It is part of things. We're a great country, a beautiful country lying between two enormous oceans, and there are vast blue inland seas and forests and mountains and prairies and, in fact, everything pertaining to landscape even until you get down to bosky dells and sparrows and worms, and we have a great signal service system and we think we are clever, but, honestly, I believe that if, instead of the signal service stations which cost so many thousand dollars apiece a year, we'd had a lot of Leander O'Briens, we'd be better off. Talk about your flags which fly from the top of some signal service station! they weren't "in it," are not in it and never will be in it in comparison with that aggressive straight-rimmed Derby hat of his. Why, the flags on the signal service station are dumb

things compared with that! It set fair or it set stormy or it set doubtful with a deadly accuracy beyond anything all the officers of the signal service have ever yet been able to devise. For instance, suppose it were set fair, that is if things were going well with us in the estimation of Leander O'Brien, then the hat would sit lightly and jauntily upon the back of his head at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and his face would beam out so roundly and glowingly that if the morning happened to be a little crisp you wanted to warm your hands before it. Contrariwise, if things hadn't gone in our estimation as they should have gone, and our attitude regarding the rest of the world was either defensive or offensive, then Mr. O'Brien's hat had a long, low, rakish tilt to the front, with the greatest depression immediately over the left eye. I noticed that this particular tilt of his hat came, usually, with the purple twilight, but I think it was rather an action of habit than of hours. As a matter of fact, Mr. O'Brien had probably never before known anything about a sunset or a purple twilight. His idea of eight o'clock in the evening had consisted of some bad gaslights on South Halsted Street and of start-

ing on adventures with "the boys" with the hat adjusted as described. It is true there was something incongruous in that rakishly-tilted hat among the sweet surroundings of a gentle country morning or midday or occasionally somewhat foggy gloaming. It seemed out of place. It was, in a sense, as if a man should casually throw a brick at his grandmother or turn handsprings down the middle aisle of a church in the midst of service; still, I came to like and even to love the air with which O'Brien wore his hat. All these habits grow on us. It became so that I even studied the degree of tilt and the angle over his head in any direction. When I saw it set on the back of his head I became elated; when I saw it cocked deeply forward in a low and lurking manner I became—to put it mildly—apprehensive.

I might as well say here, that, from the moment of enlistment, Leander O'Brien never left us. He slept on our porch that night, with many blankets for his bed and covering, and the next morning at daylight as I looked from the low doorway by the dim light of the dawn, I saw him coming from the framework landing-place of the machine.

Behind him stalked a dog, not noticed by me the night before, though without doubt he was then present with his master. It was a dog that belonged distinctly to a class, but with an individuality I've never seen excelled. He was a beautiful dog, that is, a beautiful dog in the sense that, like Victor Hugo's Gwynplaine, he was so ugly as to be entrancing. He always seemed to me green in color. He was what is called a brindle bull-dog, but he was exceptionally intense. The yellow and black and a certain bronze were so intermingled that the dog seemed to me almost a green, though there wasn't much sense in the impression. I think the shape of the dog appealed to me even before his color or general expression. It was alarming, but fascinating. In a general way, the figure was rakish while at the same time broad and short.

I will try to describe the dog in detail. As I have already said, he was a brindle, but there was a great white spot on one side of him which I was given to understand had been the result of a most delightful pit-fight at the stock yards, the hair upon the healed-up, torn-out place having come in white some weeks after the encounter. The face of the dog was very

broad and the lower jaw was most advancing. The animal had but one eye, as a result of the encounter alluded to, on the issue of which encounter, by the way, O'Brien told me he had won eighty-seven dollars and thirty cents, although he had no idea that his own dog would pull through and live after having killed his adversary. He also informed me that it had become necessary for him to lick the proprietor of the other dog and for his friends to lick various other people before they collected the money fairly staked upon the encounter. The dog was alluded to casually as "Fitz," which I discovered later was merely a shortening of the name of some champion prize-fighter. The ears of Fitz had been cut so short in his early youth that they appeared now almost as no ears at all, and the same fate had befallen his tail. His lost eye, oddly enough, had not made him entirely unpresentable. The lids had closed so that he appeared as rather naturally a one-eyed dog. Of the eye that remained I cannot say much, admiringly. Its aspect might, perhaps, be best described by the adjective "baleful." The legs of the dog were set wide apart on either side of a broad and tawny chest, and then curved

in until the feet were not very far away from each other. Fitz was the most bow-legged and sinister-looking creature it had ever been my lot to meet.

Yet, in a way, there was something cautiously lovable to this appendage of O'Brien. He seemed a part of the man. His usual position was about three feet from O'Brien's heels, and one could see that, in an emergency, if aid of any kind were needed, he meant business. Both Appleton and I had doubts about the addition of this dog to our family, but O'Brien was earnest. "Wese may need him," he said, and we finally submitted. We made gradual approaches to Fitz and, within a few days, were recognized by him as being at least allowable members of society, not, of course, ranking with his master, but still people to be casually taken note of.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOVERS.

I don't know how to describe the girl. I don't quite understand how such a fellow as Appleton could have attained such a hold upon her, for she was something exceptionally worth having. It seems to me that Appleton with his beetling brows and slouchy aspect ought not to have the right to make such a girl as Helen Daggart in love with him. There was an incongruity about the whole blessed business. She was one of the nattiest and neatest creatures I ever saw, tall and well built and with the tact of making herself most presentable as to every outline. She had fluffy brownish hair and it hung in the right way. She was full of bust, and slender of waist and broad of hip, and when she walked she sprang. Yet she was, after all, I thought at first, perhaps just the commonplace, beautiful, graceful and thoroughly good girl of the day, only more highly educated and broader of mind than is the ordinary young woman.

She must have been an appreciative and understanding woman to fall in love with Appleton, a girl who could see through a rough rind and recognize the real quality of the man. The fact that she had so fallen in love rather reconciled me to her before I met her. I said to myself. "Here's a bright woman." When I saw her—and she was not long in making her appearance—I was startled because she was so beautiful and so well dressed, and so easily adroit and discursive of speech that I could not at first quite believe in the great true heart of her, which I came afterwards to know so well.

She paid little or no attention to me. She had learned from Appleton that I was one of the things to be relied upon in the course of those two people in the world, but aside from that I was nobody. Bless her heart, she stuck to him as the bark sticks to a tree, just as any woman should stick to a man with whom she has made the stake, and I was nothing but a big brother from the beginning. It did not make any difference whether I had a collar on or not.

The only thing that I objected to was that Helen Daggart's clothes fitted her too well.

Those tailor-made suits cost money and she was too trig for anything. Furthermore, she had opinions. Now, when a woman prizes tailor-made clothes and has opinions as well, it's going too far. No woman has a right to have tailor-made clothes and opinions too. The strain on the man is too much. He has to doubly admire.

On the first day she came out to see us at the big shanty the manner in which she made her appearance was not dignified. She drove out of town, her family owning a coachman and horses, and, there having been rain and the alluvial deposits of the prairie being particularly muddy at this time of the year, the advance, though resolute was, to put it mildly, something more of a wallow than a rush. But they reached us eventually; then came a conversation between the two lovers which I could not well help hearing. She was talking to him of his invention, and of their personal affairs and all that sort of thing, and I want to say here, frankly, that, though she didn't know the difference between an air pressure and a hoe-handle or between a piston and a wheel-barrow, yet she had, in her feminine way, some sort of the judgment

which is not always just at hand to us big brutes of males who pride ourselves upon our logical quality which sometimes fails.

Nevertheless, she was mostly wrong and Appleton was mostly right. It was beautiful just to hear them. He would explain to her the peculiarities of his invention and, in technical language, demonstrate to her that it could not but succeed, and she would listen to him patiently and smilingly, as a woman can do, while she had no more idea of what he was talking about than a kitten has of the geology of the Dog Star. Nevertheless, each of these people lived for the other. She was a very interesting study for me.

They talked and talked and the end of it all was that, because he was so absorbed in and determined upon what he should do, the girl, who was worthy of him, finally encouraged his resolutions, and applauded his work, although she still murmured something of her wish that he could be "more practical." She left him more reluctantly than it seems to me was necessary. We came outside the big rectangular building, all three of us together, and, before that, they had said good-bye to each other. Then, just as we three were standing

and talking and parting, what should those two people do on this occasion but contrive to drift away together around the corner of the building where I could not see them and, I suppose, part again.

Many more visits Helen made that summer, and Appleton fell deeper and deeper in love.

I tell you he was subjugated. I don't suppose I need explain much of this because anyone who has anything to do with women, and most men have, knows what subjugation is, sooner or later. She would come out there so trim and jaunty, and it might be two thousand and ninety-five degrees in the shade, and the lace ruffle around her white throat wouldn't have any remote degree of limpness about it. As for Appleton and me, we would be just reeking under the heat. And—this is but a simile—we worked so hard on those hot days that, just from the perspiration, I was sloshy in my shoes. I have admitted that I am availing myself of poetic license, but I retract. It's only an exaggeration of an unpleasant fact. Well, just when Appleton and I were that way, that girl would come out in all her tailor-made-ness or still more distracting summer dress of gossamer and lace, and

be as cool as a cucumber. That frost and snow ruffle around her throat irritated me. No matter how wilted we were that everlasting lace thing would stand up there, stiff and immaculate.

Well, her superiority over us as to throat surroundings is but a fair illustration of her superiority in other ways. Appleton, dogged, resolute man, was, in her hands, apparently as the clay which can be squeezed into any shape, and, as for me, out of regard for my own safety, I kept aside as much as possible. I was a sort of clay in her hands, too. A little stiffer clay than Appleton was, probably, because I wasn't her particular clay—in fact, there is another girl who knows a good deal about kneading herself—but there we were, under the rule of this creature of flesh and bones and white skin and fine garb and diploma from a swagger women's college. Appleton might be full of a great idea about some little improvement in the machine, but when that blooming tailor-made suit with its filling rose up against the horizon we were gone. We were as a ship is when there comes whirling toward it a great water-spout in mid-ocean. We were as a caravan of the desert

is when the sirocco looms up in the far distance. We were as the Kansas farmer is when the cyclone comes twirling over the prairie and he knows that within the next five minutes one end of his house and his wife's cousin and his two best mules and his barn are all going to be wafted into the next county. That's what we were when that girl came. Yet, we were glad to see her coming. Everything became then a little brighter and a little better. Men are weak creatures.

The manner of their love-making was always most interesting to me. Appleton has a sort of dominant way with him, but there was no dominance apparent when Miss Daggart and he were together—at least, there was no dominance on his side of the house. That charming young woman simply arose and was tall. She had the wisdom of the college and the firmness of her convictions. She was in love with Appleton—there was no doubt of that—as I have said, something in his queer character had appealed to her, but she thought of him partly, I believe, as a great lump of most excellent marble to be shaped into a heroic and most symmetrical figure by her own fair hands. You know what I mean.

Lots of women—poor things—take fellows to mold 'em and then the fellows don't mold, and there are broken hearts sometimes; but this case was different.

Helen Daggart was the only child of Asaph Daggart, a man of substantial fortune, warm heart, and active brain. Appleton liked Mr. Daggart and admired him, but we both remarked, from time to time, that it seemed likely that Mr. Daggart did not return in very great measure, the warm admiration of the younger man.

Helen's mother was a woman with whom no one could be long acquainted without a feeling warmer than admiration. I no sooner knew her, even distantly, than I wanted, unselfishly, her friendship. The charming old lady and her husband were still in love with each other, and Helen was as the heart's core of each.

Neither father nor mother ever showed displeasure nor dissent at the affair between their daughter and Appleton. One or the other usually accompanied Helen when she came to our prairie quarters; there was a calm and apparently comfortable acceptance of the situation, and yet Appleton knew, and the old

couple knew that he knew, that they were solidly and firmly set upon in some way breaking up the love-match which seemed to be so rapidly forming under their eyes. This condition of affairs gave me much uneasiness, and although Appleton never spoke of it, I could see that it was by no means out of his mind as a subject of rather painful meditation. The bother of it was that the opposition was perfectly unspoken, the hostility being of an intangible nature, and so difficult to combat.

There was trouble in store for the lovers; I could see that from the first. Helen's parents could not object, personally, to Appleton. He was as straight of grain as men are made and showed it to the most indifferent observer, but he was an inventor, a seeker after the unknown and the hitherto impossible, an adventurer upon the shoreless seas of material creation. It was only a question of time to the imagination of "solid men" when he would become wild of eye, long of hair, and threadbare of coat. A settled home could never be his; he was the marked victim already of a fixed idea. No placid orderly family could contemplate the entrance into its circle of this

figure, with any moderate degree of equanimity.

The Daggarts loved Helen with absorbing parental affection, and, here's the rub—she loved them devotedly and was to them, though apparently willful of way and independent, entirely subject, because of the heart bond between them all.

Naturally, in the visiting back and forth, it fell often to my lot to talk to Mrs. Daggart, and, less often to Mr. Daggart. At first I was mildly interested in them both, but soon I grew earnestly so in my effort to reach their inner consciousness, and discover their plans relating to Appleton and Helen.

There was no deep strategy in them, and I soon saw what their really wise and sensible plan of campaign was. Open opposition, they well knew, would only fan the flame of love. Patient acquiescence, gentle endurance of the inevitable, that was the tone they adopted. Sooner or later, the wise old heads reasoned, Appleton would fly away in his "kite," as Mr. Daggart called the machine, and there was no telling what mode of deliverance would then naturally come to save them from the threat-

ened family alliance. Appleton might sail across the ocean, or drop into it, or land, limp and ignominious, even dead, perhaps, upon the roof of some nearby sky-scraper. There was certainly room for speculation and hope of a good riddance, when once the inventor should go away on his cloud-racing hobby. Then, oh then, the parents thought, then—"poor Helen!" But they would tend the broken lily, and bring it back to life, and in a little time she would forget Appleton and fall in love with some comfortable and well-balanced person not unlike Asaph Daggart, marry him, and be happy ever after!

This was the scheme of the parent birds. After I divined it their ill-concealed flutterings, their friendly visits and invitations, their forced interest in Appleton and his invention, all their simple ways and doings became as an open book to me. I said nothing to Appleton, who suspected nothing but was simply puzzled, as is the manner of lovers, over the ways of old folk. Appleton felt the obstacle they set in his way, and yet was thrown out of the straight method of reasoning by their very friendly manner.

Helen seemed utterly unconscious of all around her except Appleton. Whether she was or not must forever remain a question. I could not read the mind of that fair young woman.

CHAPTER V.

IN WHICH I DISTINGUISH MYSELF.

As the months wore on our work progressed, and I became gradually acquainted with some of the practical difficulties in Appleton's way. I soon saw that, like many other inventions, this one was hampered in its complete and perfect development by want of money.

"We must always take second or third best material," said Appleton one day, after an abject failure in an experiment. "That is what ails the machine from end to end. I need the best metal, wood, silk, rope, wire, everything—Wentworth, old boy, I've done my best, but I need more money!"

The big man sat down on the grass with a look somewhat drooping, for him, but after all there was not a line of real discouragement in his face or figure.

We talked for a long time, going over the problems in hand one by one, and when the palaver was over we neither of us knew very

well what to do, but we had resolved that something must be done, and at once, and we were sure that the something to do was to make an effort at least to raise a reasonable sum of ready money.

Of course the features of the situation were almost pitiful. Here was a man of great brain seeking to do something which should be not for his own advantage alone but for the good of the world, yet hampered and barred from accomplishment for lack of money. Off to the east of us loomed darkly a cloud upon the horizon. That was the smoke hanging above Chicago. Underneath that smoke, among the two or three millions of people, were two or three hundred vastly successful money-makers, men who had possession of millions of dollars and any one of whom, without embarrassment, could carry Appleton through to at least an ultimate test of the result of all his thinking. There was but one course to be pursued now. Some of these men must be reached, and I, of course, was the one to reach them.

There is no necessity for going over in detail what happened within the next three or four days. I selected eight or ten of the most

promising of those who had made vast fortunes in railroads or lard or wheat or oil or corsets and stockings and things, or horses, and I was snubbed three-fourths of the time with much vigor but great clumsiness by the capitalists upon whom I called. I kept getting more and more indignant and more determined.

I got to be mightily honey-tongued. I would go into the ante-room of a capitalist's office and, as I walked along the corridor, a little wobbly as to my legs and a little shaky as to what the result of the encounter would be, I would say to myself: "Well, after all, why shouldn't you override this other fellow? He is your equal neither socially nor intellectually, and if some one were to tell him that Sam Weller was uncle to Paul and Virginia he would believe it, simply because he had never heard of any of the three. Now, brace yourself up and be a man when you go in."

Then I would reach an ante-room and meet a boy and finally get into the next room where I was confronted, almost uniformly, by a clerk of about forty-five years, with a clean-shaven face except for a tuft of side-whiskers dangling hopelessly a little in front of the ears.

It's odd, isn't it, how those ante-room clerks always have that thing below and in front of the ears? and I want to say of all of them, and I suppose they knew their business, that each of them on every occasion which I can call to mind, treated me as if I were an angle-worm and as if it were a favor that I should be allowed to go in and have converse with his old millionaire, whose trousers generally bulged below the waistline and whom I could have thrashed in a minute and a half if I could have persuaded him to go out into the alley-way with me.

Well, I saw millionaire after millionaire and stood so much snubbing that it seemed to me I had attained a callous on my manhood, but, eventually, out of all the lot of the successful business men I could reach, I had three more or less hypnotized. Talk about kissing the Blarney Stone! Why I would have tried to kiss every paving block in Chicago and to do it on my hands and knees if I had thought it would have helped me! Even now I'm proud of what I did. Not only did I impress those old money-bags separately, but I got them in communication and got them all figuring together and on one eventful after-

noon we drove out, the three and I, all in one carriage, to meet Appleton, to examine the new venture and to decide upon how much they would invest.

It was just a beautiful thing to look upon as we four drove up in the big carriage, for which, by the way, I had paid—millionaires are exceedingly thoughtful with regard to the dollar or so payments of life—and then to see Appleton and Leander awaiting us outside the building.

I noticed with a degree of surprise that Appleton had dressed for the occasion. I do not think he had gone so far as to change his shirt; it was the same flannel shirt which he had worn in the morning and, furthermore, it was a shirt with a transferable collar, that is to say a shirt on which the collar could be changed. He had not worn a collar of late, but now he had one on. I don't know where he got it, but it was a linen collar and one of the highest I ever saw; furthermore, he had around it a tie. It was a brilliant thing but narrow; it was what I think they call a "string tie," and he had tied it very well indeed. Its general effect would perhaps have been a little better had he pinned it somewhere after first

tying it, and had the bow, when we drove up, been somewhere else than in such precise exactness under his left ear. I would like to write a treatise upon the question why neckties have such astounding tendencies toward the left side of their wearer's neck. However, to exhaust that subject would require a new and bulky volume.

But, though fine the appearance of Appleton, it was as nothing compared with that of his subordinate, Mr. Leander O'Brien. The faithful but somewhat tough O'Brien evidently recognizing the importance of the occasion, had simply "laid himself out" to meet the emergency. I had never before realized the resources of the ready-made clothing "Emporiums" of South Halsted Street. I think I am only using the most truthful simile I can think of when I say that Leander was a jewel. He shone; he scintillated. His suit was what is known as a "sack" and fitted him tightly. The plaid of coat, pants (I say "pants" advisedly) and vest fitted him perfectly. I have never had the exact measurement, but as nearly as I can tell at this time and only from memory, each square of the plaid was, say somewhere about three-quarters of an inch on

a side, and the color was bull-dog and white. Of course there isn't really any such color as bull-dog, but you know what I mean. It's that sort of growling color that they get into plaids sometimes, apparently for the delectation of just such fellows as O'Brien. He had a high white collar on, too, and he had a tie as well, but it was about nineteen times as large as the one worn by Appleton and it meant business. It was scarlet. I needn't say anything more about it. His hat was—one of O'Brien's hats—an ordinary Derby as to size; it had the most startling straight-out rim I've ever seen in my life, but that does not describe it. I can only say, it was one of those hats which we had learned to recognize as peculiar to Leander O'Brien.

His boots were polished to the highest degree; he had brought some fancy blacking in from town. He stood four or five feet behind Appleton with Fitz glooming in the rear as we drove up and, while Appleton looked abashed and anxious, there was nothing of the sort in the appearance of O'Brien. There was a jaunty swing to the fellow as he lounged between Appleton and the building, his great shoulders distending tightly the coat of his

checked suit, and there was a look in his broad, Irish-American face that showed there was fight and faithfulness in him, and fight and faithfulness are just as good when they come from South Halsted Street as when they come from any university in the world.

Meanwhile I was all anxiety and full of diplomacy. I got out my capitalists and introduced Appleton, who was hesitant and troubled, and we all went in together to look at the air machine and to have Appleton explain it and tell us about its possibilities and its monetary promise. We were like a couple of poor tugs convoying three great galleons, and it is but truth to say that we felt we were tugs and they felt that they were galleons.

It's funny about the men who are between fifty and sixty years of age and who have become millionaires—I mean it's funny about most of them—each seems to range himself into one of three classes. Here are the three sorts of millionaires: First, and I think he's rather preponderant, there is the man with side-whiskers and protuberant jaw and heavy eyebrows and commercially dominant air. Second, there is the man—I forgot to say that the first is always bald about three inches

across on the top of his head—second, there is the man with plenty of hair, a man who weighs about one hundred fifty-seven pounds and a half, who always wears full whiskers and shaves his upper lip, who is liable to be a Sunday school superintendent as well as a bank president, and who, take it all around, is pretty bad medicine. Third, there is the big round-bellied, red-faced, double-chinned, keen-eyed, well-dressed speculator and club man, who bobs up, waning and waxing, one out of a thousand, an unfixed millionaire, answering to the law of chances of the dice among his sort. Of the three, of course, the latter, despite his frailties, is the one to whom a gentleman would most incline. In fact, this latter sort of millionaire is quite likely to be a gentleman himself.

Well, as I have said, we five went in together, Elihu Hammond, Jacob Arnheim and William Tuttle, Appleton taking the lead, and I anxiously following.

Leander O'Brien lounged watchfully and, it seemed to me, almost threateningly, in the rear. Certainly, as we walked along toward where the air machine hung, nothing had yet occurred to mar the peaceful and commercial

aspect of the occasion, but it was evident that O'Brien was alert and critical of all that was going on.

Four long hours passed, four hours that I shall remember always with a feeling partly of rage and indignation, partly of allowance for the quality of mind which is expert at pence-getting and keeping, and which, in peace times, gives a standing above greatness to the man who can make two dollars take the place of one. As we talked together, my own work was introductory and general. It was necessary that Appleton should do the rest, and I must say that he did it well. I must say, further, of the men to whom he talked, that perhaps no other three men reachable could have listened more intelligently to what he said, could have appreciated more keenly his summing up of the vast possibilities of his invention, should it succeed, or his estimate of his chances of success. It is only fair to say this, but my blood boiled within me throughout all the interview. There was something so lofty and so patronizing in the demeanor of the millionaires toward us that my mood, near the end of the interview, was not a goodly nor a gentle one. Appleton became earnest

and eloquent and was clear and concise from start to finish, but his talk and demonstration did not appeal to either one of these three money-makers. I do not think that Appleton, himself, quite understood the failure of his effort. He was too earnest and absorbed, too certain that anybody who would but listen to him and hear all the facts presented must agree with him, but I could see that the blows of the blacksmith's hammer were falling upon cold metal; even O'Brien in his own way could see that. Toward the end of the conversation I saw his shoulders shift ominously once or twice, and he looked at me questioningly. It was all uncertain and he was obedient, but in that glance of his to me there was a query as to whether there wasn't a remote chance of having some sort of an excuse for licking somebody, somewhere.

I wonder if there is anything anarchistic in me? Is it right or wrong in me that there should be in my own mind a sort of antagonism against the smug man who had made a lot of money and who thinks, because of that, he knows all there is to know? I am afraid that, down in the bottom of my heart, I felt a good deal as felt my deep-chested and short-

haired and loudly-plaided friend, Leander, who was hovering behind with that too suspicious closeness. Appleton, poor boy, had made every preparation he could for a good showing off of our blazing old invention. Evidently Leander O'Brien had been hard at work. The aluminum was polished and the thing stood there, rather attractive in its way, like a vast, glittering, almost white cigar. Every expedient had been resorted to, to make apparent to the laymen the nature and workings of the machinery intended to operate the craft. The mechanism was all so adjusted that it could be worked and handled easily; and so Appleton went on with his talk, explaining, illustrating, arguing.

Once involved in the work of setting forth the nature of his invention and the work of any part of his machinery, Appleton forgot his timidity and became enthusiastic and practical and clearly eloquent. I forgot myself in listening to him. I admired him. I saw the possibilities of the thing as I never had seen them before; but did the talk, even as he warmed, have the same effect on the three old capitalists? Not a bit of it. They stood there and asked an occasional question and looked

at each other and once in a while, nodded or shook their heads as the talk went on, and when it was all through with and Appleton looked at them, it seemed to me appealingly, awaiting some comment, old Mr. Arnheim looked up:

"What do you think about it?" he said, his question being addressed to his companions.

"Oh, there may be something in it—I don't know—but I don't see any immediate money," said Mr. Tuttle, yawning. "It's one of the dream things of men of this sort. What do you think of it, Hammond?"

Mr. Hammond's red face was inscrutable and he spoke slowly. "Well, I suppose you're right, Bill—I don't know—I've a sneaking liking for the thing. However, since we've agreed to work together or not at all, I'll have to side with you. I'm afraid, Mr. Appleton, that we can't go into the thing; Good-afternoon." As he spoke, Mr. Hammond started for the door, the others following him, but before he reached the outside he hesitated, looked around and seemed half way inclined to come back. He didn't come, though, and it is a source, at this present time, of great comfort to me that he didn't. It isn't exactly

clear to me how men can kick themselves because of failure to do what they ought to have done at some certain time, but I'll venture to say that Mr. Hammond has been engaged in that occupation at frequent and long continued intervals within the last year. I will even go so far as to wager that he is at it yet. He was the keenest of wit of the three.

So they passed out into the sunlight and climbed, ponderously content, into their carriage and gradually diminished toward the east, where the smoke hung. Appleton said nothing and I said nothing, and O'Brien, while giving signs of saying something, didn't. We emerged into the sunlight together and stood there silently looking at the disappearing carriage.

As for me, my gorge rose. I am unfamiliar with a gorge, how and why it rises, or anything in particular about a gorge—I was always weak in Anatomy—but if getting "mad clear through" and getting suddenly earnest and angrily enthusiastic means that a gorge has performed that particular exploit of rising, then my gorge had risen until it was stopped by plain want of room. Appleton's face was pitiful to look upon. He never lacked pluck,

but there was a sort of blankness and something at least reminding one of hopelessness in his expression that stirred me in every fiber of my being. I thought very rapidly just then and, I am glad to say, thought very sensibly. Sometimes when a fellow is in a flaming mood he does some of his best thinking, that is, his conceptions are suddenly clearer. I suppose it's the same way when he has taken three or four drinks, the lapse being in the latter case that there is no practical carrying out of intentions. Anyhow, I had my say and it has been good for me that I said it.

I drew close to Appleton and spoke:

"As near as I can judge, Appleton, I am the possessor of somewhere between twelve and fifteen thousand dollars of assets which can be realized upon at once. I am going to have those dollars within my possession within the next twenty-four hours, and I want to inform you seriously, calmly and confidentially, that they are going into your invention."

The old boy didn't say anything at all. He looked at me for a moment in a dazed sort of way and then, as the quality of the situation dawned upon him, he shook hands with me; then I didn't like the look of his eyes. Should

a man over twenty-one ever have tears in his eyes? I wouldn't give a cent for a man who couldn't. Then he turned and went in alone to his invention. As for O'Brien, he walked up to me and looked me in the face and swung his shoulders as usual and remarked in a casual South Halsted Street sort of way: "That's the stuff!" Then he stalked off toward the stable to feed the horses and as he turned the corner the loud plaid upon him cracked. I could hear it distinctly. Anyhow, it seemed to.

That night, as we were finishing our cigars on the crazy little porch—we had been dedicating a few last words to the late visitors—I exclaimed as a kind of conclusion to the whole subject matter:

"Gold rules the camp, the court, the grove!"

"And it is likely to turn out," said Appleton quietly, not smiling over my garbled version of the poet's line, but looking at me with fire in his eyes, "that Beauty will give us the same verdict as has that jury of money-bags."

"What do you mean, Appleton?"

But he would say no more. I guessed what he meant, and remained silent.

CHAPTER VI.

WE MAKE PROGRESS.

We had as helpers four tall, raw-boned Swedes, the sons of Ole Swanson, who tilled his twenty acres of farm land a half mile southwest of us. The stalwart sons of Swanson were sometimes reinforced by his not less stalwart daughter who, added to her great strength and stature, possessed a more shrewd intellect than her brothers, as well as a shrill, penetrating voice which could be heard from an astonishing distance.

The Swanson sons were ideal for our work, for they had neither interest in nor curiosity about it. They bent their backs, and rounded their great shoulders for us whenever they were needed, and then went their way without thought or comment.

Nothing surprised or disconcerted these unemotional Swedes. A fall of twenty feet, a scrubbing over the fields at the end of a rope attached to the reeling, tumbling machine, or a sudden jerk at any time, from any source,

all these experiences were received as a part of the regular day's work, to be paid for by the regular day's wages, and nothing to be said about them.

Leda, the Amazon, was more human in construction and more than once Old Ole Swanson had to give her a stern lecture impressing the importance of silence and secrecy as to our affairs. Her chief temptation was in connection with a certain Christian Frederickson, who, in his Sunday clothes, broad and red of visage and hands, came to see her regularly twice a week after his day's work was over in the railway machine shop, some miles away, where he was employed.

Frederickson was a Norwegian. In his eyes there sparkled the light of an inquiring spirit, and he was, although heavily framed, active and even light in his movements. When Leda brought him on an evening walk toward our quarters the pair usually stopped at a respectful distance beside a clover field, where, leaning upon the fence, they looked long and searchingly at our buildings and their surroundings.

Toward the end of our labors on the prairie, when we were experimenting at night—all

of our real work of that kind had to be done after dark—we could hear, far over the fields, the strident tones of Leda's voice rising and falling in the peculiar sing-song of her people, even when they speak English, as she talked to Frederickson, and occasionally we noted his deeper and yet thin harsh tones and we knew that the couple were following our movements, stumbling and running along over the uneven ground, while we sailed and dipped and slanted uncertainly around in the lower fields of air.

The frank interest of these lovers in us was far from pleasing, as it was, of course, essential to our success that little attention should be paid to our venture by the outer world. Especially indignant at the display of natural curiosity on the part of the fair Leda and her swain was Leander O'Brien. With the natural gallantry of his race, to no member of which a petticoat can ever be indifferent, O'Brien had not failed to try to make himself agreeable to Ole Swanson's daughter, and with such success that she blushed and bridled whenever she met that gallant young bachelor, but all other manifestations showed that her heart

was fixed on one alone and that one, Frederickson.

In time, the Norwegian became one of our helpers at night, and a valuable aid he proved, quick, alert and obedient, but he and O'Brien, however well they worked together, were always when at rest, chafing and glowering at each other. The trouble never reached the fighting stage, though, for, in reality, O'Brien cared nothing for Frederickson's sweetheart, it was only the galling fact that any young woman could for a moment look at any other fellow when he, Leander O'Brien, was present which ruffled his temper and at times embittered an hour or two of his careless existence.

There were times when we thought that Frederickson would make exactly the third hand we needed when our machine should go out in the world at last for actual work, but in the end we decided upon O'Brien for that place, as, aside from every other consideration, Frederickson was too great of weight and then, before long, something happened which convinced us that O'Brien was too useful, faithful and devoted to be dropped from our service for any reason.

It was good to study the relations of na-

ture's wild things with each other, and it was a sort of laxation in contrast with the work on the man-killing machine with which I had become identified. I often wandered away alone and lay close to the ground, so to speak, becoming a part as nearly as I could of the romances and the comedies and the tragedies of the life of the grass. One day I especially remember, and an incident of it. The country road lay white and bare and dusty, but dipped down into the creek and then rose again up the bank on the other side to straggle away to the village it was seeking. The creek had a certain lustiness, and there was water in it even in midsummer. There were many frogs along the margin who rather prided themselves on their vocal accomplishments and sang much at night. There were also snakes in the grass about. Of these we never spoke to Helen; it might have caused us to lose our much prized walks with her through the quiet country, toward sundown on summer days.

I heard—I hardly know what to call it—a queer sort of squeak and tumble along the road which led away from the place where I was lying in front of the old barrack, and

then I saw something very fine. Down the slope of the descent toward the creek came a frog gasping, poor thing, with each leap, and leaping about seven feet at a time. He sought the water, and death was behind him. Swiftly and steadily, keeping pace almost with his desperate leaps, came the ordinary garter snake, most familiar of all the snakes of the country. Neither frog nor snake noticed me, although I ran out and along beside them, so deeply interested were they, the one seeking the chance of life and the other seeking prey. As for me, I felt, as I trotted along, a curious interest in noting the manner of the trail, the quality of the convolution of it left by the snake upon the white dust of the road. So far as emotions go I don't think they were aroused in me at all until, just as the frog had almost reached the creek in safety, the snake seized upon it by one of its hind legs and withdrew itself into its own coils contentedly to gorge its prey at leisure; then came the blow across the snake with something picked up at hand and its almost instant death, while the frog floundered weakly to the water and swam to safety beneath the overlapping reeds. Somehow the incident gave me courage.

"We'll dodge our difficulties yet," I thought.

But I am wandering away again, just as I used to, from our work, and its story.

It is hard to tell in detail how the machine was improving. Firstly, because—save in a purely objective way—I made slight study of the scientific details of it, and secondly, because no matter how hard my degree of study, lacking as I am in all ability in such direction, I could not tell with any degree of clearness that would appeal to an expert just what the improvements were. I cannot tell how, with his liquified or compressed air, whichever it was that Appleton utilized, we got more and more of propelling power with slight weight, nor can I tell as an expert could about the steering apparatus, save that the propulsion eventually became tremendous and the power of direction at least respectable. We rose and fluttered and swerved, but ever with each slight ascension—for we never ventured far—we did a little better, either in the quality of the force applied or in the working of some gearing or some bearing. It was fascinating to me, this exploration of the air depths, but it was so, largely as it is fascinating to a small boy to see how far he can go into a grave-

yard of a dark night. I went up with Appleton in that speculative thing in the darkness and in close sympathy with Leander O'Brien, who I firmly believe was as much scared as I was. Once "upstairs," as Leander put it, we two, though lacking the inventor's unconscious bravery, became somewhat brave ourselves, and, acquiring in a measure the calmness of utter hopelessness, performed our respective duties with some degree of intelligence and tact. Never, though, did Leander and I become really and thoughtfully courageous. We were but as the driftwood which thinks not at all but obeys the direction of a controlling current. Yet it may be fairly said of us that we did our best. One night Leander O'Brien did something which bound him to us with more than the conventional bands of steel and which settled forever the question as to who in all future operations of our venture should be our henchman, helpmeet and friend.

We had risen higher than usual that night, which was a dark one, and Appleton was in blithesome mood because some new gearing of his had worked so well and because in his own vaulting opinion he just then owned the world. I was somewhat elated myself because

we had gone up fairly and squarely and with a little less than the usual amount of something-is-going-to-happen feeling. We were at least five hundred feet above the earth, and, for once, were really facing a moderate northeast wind and holding ourselves in position. To the east, from our altitude, I could see twinkling bravely and boldly the lights of the city of Chicago and, though in our boat we seemed to be a little better off than usual, there occurred to me the lines of that poet who wrote something about the "Cruel lights of London," and I said to myself, "Oh, 'Cruel lights' be hanged! 'Cruel lights' mean terra firma and beefsteak"—and, just then, something happened.

It wasn't much; it was only that one of my murderous friend Appleton's gearings had become hide-bound or something of that sort and that he leaned over and said to me quite complacently, "We are a good way up, and I don't know whether the power is going to hold out or not." That was all there was to it, but, to tell the truth, it troubled me. Then we began to drop and dip. Then O'Brien looked at me for a moment appealingly, and almost under his breath began to use such

choice South Halsted Street expressions as made something simply classical, something which I wish could have been taken down in shorthand; but we did our best, O'Brien and I; we jumped to the places which we had learned were ours in such emergency as we went downward at an angle all too sharp toward a grove for which the air-ship at that particular moment had conceived an impassioned and violent affection.

There came a moment when, with our slant and quality of descent and drift, and despite all Appleton's wild efforts with his packed-in powers, it became apparent to each of us that we were going to have a close, not to say touching, interview with that grove. We couldn't miss it. To plunge into the top of a certain looming element of it seemed our certain fate. This meant disaster of a sort you could describe in almost any sort of mood and with almost any kind of adjectives. Somehow, and in some way, Appleton made our unaccustomed carrier lift up its head as we swooped down so that there was almost an inclination to the horizontal. But it was inevitable with the downward drift that, if we missed the trees, we should drop into the Des

Plaines River, which curved at this point, and so involve a possible end to the machine, and to certain people.

We had ropes and an anchor, of course; below us spread out about five acres of greenery, the tops of elm trees. Unable longer to resist the force of gravitation, unable longer to breast and remain stationary in the face of the northeastern wind, the machine was now close upon the grove. Should we land amidst it we would be in a bad way; should we miss it, we would be in worse strait still. We dropped our anchor and took the chances.

We caught fairly in a tree-top near the southwestern edge of the grove very near the river, and we caught well and firmly, while the machine, tangled, slanted distressingly toward the southwest, under the prevailing wind.

There we were, three men, sitting in a little boat-shaped affair, upon anything but an even keel, though our frail carrier and its machinery were attached firmly. We were about one hundred feet above the ground and the wind was gaining force, force enough to keep us away up there strained loftily to the southwest. All at once it shifted to the east and we were sorry we had let the anchor go.

Freed now, we could land on the prairie. As it was we didn't see any practicable way to get out of "the hole," as O'Brien called our predicament, though assuredly we weren't in any hole. On the contrary, a hole was just what would have been appreciated just then. We wanted to get down to where there were holes. We weren't enamored of day's blue ether nor of night's less brilliant ether. We wanted terra firma.

And then one Leander O'Brien, ready heretofore to march any day in a procession flaunting a green flag with a yellow harp upon it, and really hopeful in his thought that The Island of his kindred might possibly be allowed a personal entity among the nations of the earth, despite all geographical and political and sensible relations—one Leander O'Brien, each one of whose relations was a policeman, a sewer-digger, a political boss, a penitentiary inmate or a blessed old father of a family, this Leander O'Brien did something.

"Youse just stay in here," he said, "and I'll fix it! Something's got to be did and mighty sudden! This thing has got to be loosed and then go somewhere. Anywhere except these

woods! They's only one way to do it. Gimme the axe."

He didn't wait for consent or orders. He grabbed the hatchet which we carried for emergencies and a moment later was over the end and slipping down the anchor rope. The anchor had clutched together some of the outspreading lighter limbs at the very top of the elm, and O'Brien, as he reached the anchor, could merely thrust his way into a great mass of green leaves, the foliage of hundreds of little limbs dragged close together as described. He burrowed his way down somehow. I saw him with his legs and one arm twined round the sturdiest of the small limbs so massed, and saw the axe rise and fall, each blow severing a limb and lessening the resisting force until suddenly, with a tear, the machine leaped aloft, swung clear of the forest and we sailed off, to land quite gallantly and gently and respectably half a mile away.

But what had become of O'Brien? Had he been tossed away from the tree as the slender limb upon which he had entwined himself swung back? If his grip had held could he still have reached the ground? There was anxiety on our part, but O'Brien was all

right. We found him, ragged and scratched, but not seriously hurt in any way.

"It was dead easy," O'Brien insisted, in reply to our inquiries, "I hung on when the thing flipped, and I slid down somehow and the limbs kept getting bigger until I got to the tree itself, and then, blazes! I couldn't have slid down if the tree had been three inches furder around!"

After that there was no question as to who should be the man to go with us.

CHAPTER VII.

WAR.

One hot, breathless August morning we awoke to a world about to plunge in war.

For months we had watched the progress of events and had known a crisis was approaching. Now that crisis was here and we could not realize it. It seemed unreal, the terrific news which came. Europe, America, Asia, Africa and the islands of the seas were hurrying toward desperate conflict. There was upon the stormy waters or upon the threatening land no place where the dove of peace could rest.

The peace which had followed the Spanish-American war was almost universal, but it was nominal. There was unrest. The spirit of change and combination was universal. It permeated all classes. It agitated the capitalists and reached even to the shopkeepers, the last, ordinarily, to feel the influence of new ideas. All through the world of trade and commerce, the seeking world which supplies

us with what we need from day to day, went the consciousness that new conditions and a new arrangement were to follow a great struggle, and that commercial steps swift and earnest should be taken with reference to the outcome.

All the world knew that the relations of the nations upon earth were to be readjusted. All the world knew, as did the mapmakers, that new forces, industrial, political, literary and social, were to be forcefully applied in new places and with an aim to new results upon certain areas of the earth's surface heretofore left, either fallow or cultivated viciously, or, rather, to use an extenuating expression, with an unconscious selfishness begotten of whatever race or races might be responsible.

It was a vague fear but a real one. It was an undefined terror hard to illustrate by a simile. In a room somewhere upon the globe a group of girls might have been clustered dreading an approaching thunder storm. The black clouds dropped from overhead and black clouds rose from the horizon to meet them, and the thunder peals were terrifying. The girls might have been in a London suburb or

in a country-house outside of Chicago or in a villa outside of Vienna, or in a fragile home of some Mandarin in the interior of China. These girls could not have been more alarmed, or more or less brave according to their quality, than were the nations of the earth, feeling, through the expressions of their statesmen and their newspapers, the climax imminent. The popular mind is, after all, the register of what is plainly existent, or of what is immediately threatening.

Never in the history of the nations had the pulses of so many millions beat so fast; never had each man, thinking for himself, regarding his race, his religion and all his just affiliations, resolved more honestly and more firmly as to his acts in the immediate future. It came strangely to be understood even throughout the races not actively engaged in the struggle. They felt it dimly in the limits of the Malayan Peninsula; they felt it in Borneo; they felt it in the northern end of Japan where the Japanese hardly go themselves; they felt it to the ends of the visited parts of the understanding earth. America had vital interests at stake, for from the coast of Europe to the coast of China, as has been

told before, the United States had a bridge, or, to put it better, a highway, a bridge from the mainland to the Canaries, from the Canaries to Puerto Rico, from Puerto Rico to the Isthmus, from the Isthmus to Hawaii, and from Hawaii to the islands of the Pacific and all the Asiatic coast. Such possessions had made the statesmen of certain European nations think. Such possessions had resulted in the development of a vast American trade, a trade dependent upon highways parallel with those of Great Britain, highways the same in fact, to be kept clear forever as against any interference of the rest of the world. These highways must be defended, this vast and increasing trade preserved.

Five hundred millions of Asiatic people, mostly cotton-clad, and producing themselves only a tithe of the cotton they required, were now added to those who consumed the surplus products of America. Before the Spanish-American war only five per cent of the exports of the United States went westward. Now the trade was more than quadrupled, though only in its infancy. A procession of huge steamers, heavily laden, crossed the Pacific, bearing cotton and machinery and all

the thousand products of farm or manufactory, and returned with their cargoes of sugar, hemp, indigo, coffee, tobacco, woods and the hundred other products of the Orient. The deep rivers of China, now open to the world, enabled the ships to reach the far interior and load or unload at ports heretofore unapproachable. The Asiatics themselves were benefited, as were their unaccustomed visitors, and never in the history of the world had there grown so swiftly a trade so rich and full of promise. With it came to America a prosperity almost unexampled, even in the history of that fortunate country, and now that prosperity was imperiled. The United States and Great Britain were content with existing conditions, but not so Russia and Germany and France. They could not yet compete on even terms for the great commercial prize, and that alone gave cause for intense jealousy and an attempt at trade reprisals in the form of embarrassing restrictions upon the admission of goods from the countries reaping wealth in the new field. They were ineffective and hurt like a clumsily-thrown returning boomerang, these invidious laws, but they made bad feeling. There were propositions to dismember

China and divide the territory between the great powers, America included, but these were rejected, while it was made clear that were such partition attempted the old Empire would have the assistance of Great Britain and the United States in the preservation of its integrity. In America, especially, the feeling in favor of such course in such event was something overwhelming. Should we throw away what we had gained? Should we sacrifice any measure of our new prosperity? From the statesmen in Washington to the cotton-grower of the South, the corn-grower of the West, the wheat-grower of the North and the manufacturer of the East the answer came in chorus, and it was "No!"

There were other causes leading to a conflict, but the nature of these is told elsewhere. The control of the Nicaragua Canal was one thing. Deeper than all was the feeling that something more than trade privileges were at stake. There was coming swiftly now the definition of the relations of nations. Politically and rationally speaking, the world was split in twain with only one fragment lying outside, that fragment being Germany, the one nation whose place as the motherland of

the Anglo-Saxon should have made her first in the combination of her brood, of the magnificent spawning from the place of the aurochs and the deep forests and the hides-of-land folk.

Never since the world began had there been such formation everywhere of companies and regiments and divisions and corps of all the available fighting material of a country. Never before had the taxes been so raised. The American Congress alone had voted, without a murmur from the people, three hundred million dollars for the navy. England was as alert and active. Never before had the supposedly great men gathered together in such solemn council by day and night. Never before had the great armory workshops been so strained in the effort to produce efficient weapons of war within the shortest practicable time. Russia had been garnering her gold and teaching her artisans and strengthening her navy and extending her lines of railway in preparation for the great emergency. In Germany the vaults of Spandau were packed nearly to the bursting point, and the fighting strength on land and sea had been increased. As for France, the nation of which one, think-

ing of the Zola-Dreyfus madness, said, perhaps unjustly, "Decadence," the nation where militarism controlled by clericalism had become too dominant a force, there was at least a fine outward showing, there were camps and maneuvers on a splendid scale, the officers of both army and navy had chests well bulged out and shoulders well bulged in behind, and the rank and file were at least decently well dressed and fed, and the millions of francs from the provinces came pouring in, and there was, externally, a vast army well equipped and bloodthirsty, and in it were many gallant gentlemen who deserved a better setting.

As to Austria, the men who had, a few years ago, yelped and struggled and made ignoble exhibitions of themselves in racial debate in the Austrian Reichrath became suddenly men impelled by a common impulse to work together under a common flag. Germans, Poles, Czechs, Magyars, Moravians and all the rest came together in the spirit which makes men what we call patriotic. They forgot their little differences and were prepared to fight side by side for the Austrian Empire. The gentleman who hit another gentleman on

complete at the earliest possible moment, without regard to ordinary considerations of economy, the Nicaragua Canal.

John Savage, the American engineer, had been working away steadily for some time, and had made good use of everything he had at his command. He had planned to take five years in which to do his work and was well on with the preliminary part of it, with much of his machinery on the ground. The work was well inaugurated at either end, but that was all. The great American company, to which a concession had been made, and the contractors, who were first partners in the enterprise, had naturally sought to estimate the length of time in which the canal could be most economically constructed. Time was but a subordinate consideration with them. Even the estimate of the period required and of the money to be expended demanded the utmost engineering skill; and then only an approximate conclusion could be reached. We all know of the canal in a general way, but at the risk of being heavy in telling a story I must, for the sake of making clear all that was done, tell of the nature of the country to be crossed.

The canal lies between latitude 11° and

11° 30′ north, and longitude 83° to 86° west from Greenwich, all in the state of Nicaragua, except about forty miles which border upon the state of Costa Rica. Its eastern terminus is at Greytown, two thousand miles by the Windward passage from New York City and one thousand miles by the Yucatan passage from Key West. The western terminus is at Brito, twenty-seven hundred miles from San Francisco. The general course is east and west, the distance between the two ports being one hundred and seventy miles.

The topography of the country is formed by two mountain chains, the western a volcanic upheaval skirting the Pacific coast at a distance of from four to eight miles; the eastern the main Cordilleras, skirting the Atlantic coast near Greytown at a distance of from fifteen to twenty miles. These two ranges unite at the eastward in the highlands of Costa Rica in a knot of volcanic peaks. They again unite to the westward in the highlands of Honduras and Guatemala, thus forming an enclosed basin, twelve thousand square miles of which drain into a system of lakes and rivers which finds its outlet through the San Juan River at Greytown. The main feature of

In Lake Nicaragua and nearly opposite the Pacific division of the canal, at some five to ten miles from the shore, is the island of Ometepe, which contains two volcanic cones, one nearly perfect in form and rising to an altitude of five thousand eight hundred feet; the other rising to an altitude of four thousand six hundred feet. Both of these are strikingly visible from all parts of the lake and the adjacent shores, and far out on the Pacific. To the westward of Lake Managua are also several volcanic peaks, the most notable of which is Momotombo, rising from the shore of the lake to an altitude of over six thousand feet, and the other, Momotombito, situated in the lake, rising to nearly four thousand feet.

I know that this appears all guide-bookish and dull reading, but what we made happen there gives an interest to every feature of the region. Hundreds of thousands of travelers have seen them now.

The canal project was, from the first, simply a proposition to extend the level of Lake Nicaragua as far toward each sea as possible, and then by a series of locks drop down to tide level. In this proposition the Pacific divide must be cut down to the level of Lake

Nicaragua by a through cut, about eighty feet deep at the summit and nine miles long, into the basin of the Tola River, so that this basin could be closed by a high dam at a point called La Flor, some eighty feet high and seventeen hundred feet long in the gap of the Coast Range previously referred to. This dam would be within four miles of the Pacific Ocean at Brito, and the descent to the level of the sea could be made by three or four locks. On the Atlantic side it was proposed to close the valley of the San Juan River at a distance of sixty to seventy miles from Lake Nicaragua by a dam or embankment abutting the spurs of the Cordilleras and extending across the valley. This, it was estimated, would be sixty to seventy feet high in places and several miles in length, thus forming an artificial lake by flooding out the valley of the San Juan to a depth of sixty feet or more in its lower courses.

The Upper San Juan River for a distance of some thirty miles from the lake required deepening by dredging. From the lower end of this artificial lake, skirted by the dam at Tamborgrande, the cut was to be made across the saddle in the Cordilleras. It

the nose one day in the course of a debate, shook hands with his brother statesman and dearest foe, and they resolved to die together. And so it was with the other nations naturally allied with these. The pot was seething.

The immediate excuses for the struggle when it came were relatively insignificant. They are ever at hand when nations clamor. And so, blindly, madly, yet propelled by irresistible forces, the nations were arrayed to fight to the death. The lines were natural except for the Germans, who were groping helplessly as a people, and, so far as they were natural, they were in a way satisfactory. It was easy for the common soldier to know where to look for friend or foe. In America the German citizens as one man stood for their adopted country. "It is true," said one, "that we love our mother country, but we have espoused America and we leave all to follow her."

This was when the day of action came, the day of meetings, speeches and resolutions having passed.

"Your head shall fall," said a Norseman to a prisoner, in the time of Harold Fairhair. "If

you know things after you die, wink your eyes."

"I will do so," said the other Norseman, and the blow was given—but he did not wink. That was the Norseman, one type of him whose ancestors overran the British Isles. There is no chronology in this—and that is the man, that is the type of the men who have held the little group of islands they have won, who have sent out, because it was in their sons' blood, groups of people who have seized upon a great part of the world, who peopled Northern America, though the children are apart, who have made old and ancient Australasia to blossom as the rose, who will just as surely people Africa, the lush continent so long neglected by the civilized, and enlighten Asia, as the world turns on an invisible intangible axis and brings about what men believe in and know, Night and Morning. And these made the Anglo-Saxon alliance.

CHAPTER VIII.

A PATH FOR EMPIRE.

Upon one fact the mind of every American citizen rested with satisfaction at the moment when the nations of the world began their combat. The Nicaragua Canal—long planned—long talked of—was completed to such a point as to allow the greatest ships to go freely through it from ocean to ocean. A few minor details remained to be finished, but for practical use the canal was open.

I was especially interested in this feature of the situation, for I personally knew the route of the Nicaragua Canal from end to end, and knew all its planning. It seemed but yesterday to me, though in reality more than two years had passed since I was with the great engineer in charge of the vast enterprise, and about to begin his work. Appleton was now full of questions about this work in its minutiæ, for he saw plainly its tremendous consequences and import, and as I told him the story as I knew it, with more detail than

I had thought of before, he grew enthusiastic, not only over what was now made possible, but over what had already been achieved.

The Nicaragua Canal is now known in all its features to everyone. Its construction is a matter of history, but the human side of events somehow gets lost in the pages of the historian. The Wild Goose, too, has its place in the record of public events as the fore-runner of the new arm—nay, the wing of war—but its history, as it was related to men and women, is now being told for the first time in this imperfect way of mine.

It chanced that I saw the furious and determined beginning and the triumphant ending of the Nicaragua Canal enterprise. As the story of the battle of the nations cannot be told without including that of this masterpiece of work, I shall tell here what I saw, and what I know about it.

Soon after our war with Spain was ended, and long before I had heard from Appleton or settled down to this peaceful summer on the prairie of which I have been telling, I was in Greytown, Nicaragua, as confidential secretary to George Strong, head of the Commission of the United States, appointed to

this basin is Lake Nicaragua, with an area of some three thousand square miles, with a low-water elevation above sea level of one hundred feet, and a high-water elevation some thirteen feet greater. This lake is one hundred and ten miles long and some sixty miles wide in its broadest part, and its depth extends below sea level. Twelve to fifteen miles to the westward of the lake is a second lake called Lake Managua, some thirty miles long and twenty miles wide, at an elevation twenty-eight feet higher, and discharging into Lake Nicaragua. The outlet of Lake Nicaragua is the San Juan River, beginning at Fort San Carlos, and by a meandering course of one hundred and ten miles making its way to the sea at Greytown. The most considerable tributary of the San Juan is the San Carlos River, which enters from the south about fifty miles from the sea. This drains the Costa Rica highlands and starts within twenty miles of San Jose in Costa Rica, and is a torrential stream, carrying large quantities of detritus.

The general situation in Nicaragua is, therefore, a system of streams draining the steep mountain slopes which hold the basin and two lakes draining to the Caribbean Sea

through a gap in the eastern Cordilleras which are here broken down nearly to sea level, this gap being several miles wide. On the Pacific side the Coast Range is also broken down nearly to sea level, within four miles of Brito, the gap at this point being only about one-third of a mile wide. Between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific the distance in the narrowest part is but twelve miles and the greatest elevation is but fifty-two feet above the low-water of Lake Nicaragua. On the Atlantic slope, by the San Juan River, the descent is gradual except as it is interrupted by the rapids at Toro, Castillo and Machuca, all situated within a length of twenty miles and beginning thirty miles from the lake. The situation virtually constitutes a trough across the American Isthmus one hundred and seventy miles long, of which Lake Nicaragua is the summit, and is the lowest gap in the hemisphere from Point Barrow in Alaska to the Straits of Magellan. This trough, fortunately, is in the axis of the northeast trade winds, which are concentrated there as in a funnel, giving an almost constant breeze of eight to ten miles an hour. So the climate is a healthy one.

would be about three miles long and have a maximum depth of three hundred and twenty-five feet and would extend the level of Lake Nicaragua into the valley of a small stream called the Deseado. This valley was to be closed by another embankment from three to five miles east of the divide cut, and at this point locks were to be placed, reaching down to the level of the Caribbean, and the canal was to be cut for some ten miles thence, at sea level, to Greytown on the sea. What problems for the engineer!

Here was the general plan devised for the gigantic work:

Beginning at Greytown a harbor was to be created by means of breakwaters extending out to sea for a mile or more and by dredging. The canal was to extend southwesterly across a nearly level plain, but slightly elevated above sea level, for a distance of ten miles to the foothills. At this point locks were to be constructed for a distance of two miles to the level of Lake Nicaragua, to be fixed one hundred and ten feet above sea level. At this point at the head of the locks the Deseado Valley was to be closed by embankments, forming a basin three miles long, up

to the foot of the divide cutting. This divide cutting was to be some three miles long on the base, with a maximum depth of three hundred and twenty-five feet and was the most formidable part of the undertaking, and the one requiring the most time. The rock from this cutting was to be used for the construction of breakwaters and for the masonry of the locks. Rock and earth together were to be hauled several miles to form the closing embankment across the San Juan River at either Ochoa or Tamborgrande.

After passing, the divide cutting the canal was to open out into the valley of a small stream called the Limpio, and following it down for a couple of miles find the valley of the San Juan River proper. From this point for a distance of forty-four miles, following the course of the San Juan River to the foot of Toro Rapids, no work was required except the clearing out of timber and the straightening of an occasional bend. From Toro Rapids to Lake Nicaragua the river had to be deepened on the average from ten to fifteen feet for a distance of thirty miles, and in this stretch was some submarine rock excavation. After reaching the lake at Fort San Carlos

some deepening of the approaches to the river was required for a distance of six miles from shore; then for a distance of fifty miles across the lake the water was of ample depth.

At the other end of the projected canal was another theatre of action.

The Pacific division was to be nineteen miles long, beginning at a point about midway of the Lake opposite the island of Ometepe at the mouth of the River Lajas. Following up this stream and crossing the divide into the valley of the Rio Grande was a distance of nine miles, requiring a maximum cutting of eighty feet. Down in the Rio Grande, with some improvements through what is known as the Tola basin, an artificial lake some six miles long, was planned to be formed by a dam at La Flor seventy to eighty feet high. This lake was to have an area of about seven square miles. From its level at La Flor, locks were to descend to the level of the Pacific for two miles, and the next two miles were to constitute the harbor and entrance at Brito entering the Pacific under a bluff rising sheer from the water nearly four hundred feet.

The construction of this work, it was estimated, involved the handling of sixty to

seventy million yards of earth, about one-half of which would be by dredging, the blasting and removal of twenty-five to thirty million yards of rock, the construction of fifteen to twenty million yards of embankment, the making one and a half million to two million yards of masonry, about two miles of breakwaters, one hundred miles of railroad; and the use of not less than one and a half million tons of coal and thirteen hundred tons of dynamite! The material to be excavated would fill a square mile over one hundred feet deep.

The difficulties in execution would be due largely to the unpreparedness of a new country, one to two thousand miles away from a base of supplies and from regions whence workmen could be drawn. The facilities for transportation must be provided, there being existent only the very inadequate and uncertain navigation of the River San Juan.

The Pacific end of the canal as originally planned was to be worked from San Francisco, as a base, and later it was decided to work it from the Atlantic side after transportation facilities to reach it had been provided. There were no natural harbors on either

coast; therefore one that would permit transports to land must be made at each end before any serious work could be undertaken. Machine shops and depots of supplies must be created on the ground, for no such facilities were in existence. Hospitals and habitations must be constructed and police service organized. The labor supply of the country was entirely inadequate, and what there was must be trained to proper habits for work of this magnitude.

The resources of the country were also inadequate in the sense that they were not developed and could not be developed in time to serve a large purpose in the construction of the canal. In short, the problem was first —to produce in Nicaragua a situation by providing all necessary facilities as ports, transportation system, buildings, and an organization with machine shops and everything necessary to make and repair tools and machinery and to put into operation steamship lines from both Greytown and Brito. All this must be done before the main work itself could be undertaken with vigor and prosecuted with any degree of economy.

How long it would take to produce

these facilities was the uncertain question in the problem; how far rainfall and climatic conditions would affect the question was yet to be determined, although the experience here was likely to be more favorable than at Panama. All these questions would develop during the period of preparation so that when the main work itself was systematically undertaken, it could be done with some certainty as to the time of completion. The time of the main work would be determined by the main cutting across the spur of the Cordilleras on the eastern division. This would involve the removal of over twelve million yards of rock and over six million yards of earth within a distance of three miles, and it would be solely a question as to how large a force of men and machinery could be applied to it. The material must be loaded on cars and hauled away as the flanks of the mountains were so steep as to prohibit deposit of material in the vicinity. A large fraction of this material could, however, be put to good use in the construction of embankments, masonry and breakwaters.

The western division also involved an element of time, as it could not be undertaken

with economy until it could be reached by a transportation system from the Caribbean coast, as San Francisco was too remote and the cost of coal on the Pacific side too high. This work, though, was distributed over a much longer distance and the material could be left adjacent to the cutting, and the embankment work was much less formidable, so that it could be handled in less time after it was once reached. The remainder of the work was well distributed and was simply a question of the amount of facilities which could be applied to it.

After having considered all these problems the big American Company had gone to work under government encouragement. Vast amounts of money had been expended and John Savage had done well. The harbor of Greytown had become a real harbor, and enormous appliances and a large force of men were already being utilized. Then came the backing of two nations.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOUR AND THE MEN.

All had been determined regarding the tentative alliance of Great Britain and the United States. But the Anglo-Saxons are practical and, even before the details of this alliance were fixed, they had arranged for working enormously together toward a contingency. It was understood that America should control the Nicaragua Canal but that Great Britain should have the right of use, and it was also arranged that Great Britain should join the United States in the production of available funds for securing the greatest results within the shortest time. There was conference between statesmen, and a man of high standing, of admitted honesty and tact and energy, George Strong, was finally selected, who was given almost unlimited power as representing, in a manner, two nations, and was told to build that canal at once, to build it well, to build it within the shortest possible time and to be inconsiderate, save in a reasonable way, of all expenditure, and a meeting

was arranged between the Commissioner and Savage, the great engineer, who had already overcome the first obstacles of the enormous enterprise.

The two men met in a hotel in Greytown, the canal's eastern terminus. I say "two" men, for though I was with them I could not count myself as of them in what they were about to do. I was, while perhaps a social equal, only a secretary to the Commissioner, and, necessarily, I was with him from this time almost continuously. They met and we all dined together and became acquainted. I liked the engineer. He was gaunt and bronzed and his face—for he wore only a moustache—showed strong lines, his head, getting bald, was admirably shaped, and his eye was clear. I could see that the Commissioner, older and balder and heavily bearded, liked him, too. We had little talk of the canal that night. That was left for the morning.

But the evening was not wasted entirely. The two men smoked, talked and played billiards diligently. They talked not at all after the first few words that evening of a canal which should split a hemisphere and which should afford facilities for the Anglo-Saxon's

grasping of his own in what he needs for fulfilling his career in the history of this planet.

The two men did not say much on any subject but they studied each other at the billiard table and as they lounged in the smoking room. The Commissioner, who played badly, won the first game of billiards. The table was a trifle slanted and the lighter of the two red balls was cracked, and the engineer, who played even worse, won the second game and then they took a drink together wondering whether or not they ought to take a drink at all in such a climate. Then they separated and each went off to bed and, it is safe to say, thought long before sleep came to him, and set his teeth together and resolved that, so far as in him lay, that canal, the most prodigious work of modern times, should be built, and well built, within the shortest number of months and weeks and days and hours and minutes practicable with such money and men as could be commanded from all sources. And it may be said here and now that, after the talk, in the sunlight of the next morning, the two men understood each other thoroughly and thenceforth became somewhat as brothers and planned and worked together faithfully

until they had accomplished what all the world now says was a good thing.

Three men, well-scrubbed in water which was too warm, and in clothing which was scandalously thin, ate their breakfasts of egg and coffee and toast, and, in all honesty, it must be said of the plain hen that her egg is about the same no matter how near the place of its advent is to the equator. They were good eggs eaten by those two gentlemen that morning and, as to the quality of the toast, it provoked profanity neither from the Commissioner nor from the engineer. As for the coffee, where could better coffee be had than where coffee is grown? As for the fruit, where could better fruit be had than in such a latitude?

It was a good breakfast and there was smoking after it on a piazza, where there was a decent breeze, then business began.

"It is scarcely necessary," said the Commissioner, as he leaned back cigar in mouth, and looked at the engineer, considering thoughtfully his shape of head and quality of jaw, "It is scarcely necessary to say to you that as the middle-aged messenger boy of one nation and, in a way, of another, I am going

to ask you what you can do. Can you tell me about the canal?"

"I think I can," was the reply.

"Well, we've run some things over casually by correspondence and reports and, with your habits of thought and conciseness of expression, you have probably outlined things more closely than could have any other man upon the face of the globe. But this is what I want of you: I want you to meet me, not merely half-way, but with an utter recklessness; I want you to have the record in future history of having been a great engineer who accomplished with unlimited resources the greatest results within a certain time. I want you to tell me what all this great matter is. I know, for instance, that there is a great thing shaped like an hour-glass and called the Western Hemisphere; I know that where the neck is narrowest the Frenchmen, under the unfortunate De Lesseps, have digged in sand and have buried many men near by; I know that there has been a scandal abroad and that there is no canal, and that in France there are reputations torn to shreds. Now, tell me why this canal is better or why we should not, if we can, take up the older one partly built—for

those French millions could not have been entirely wasted—and finish it as best we can with Anglo-Saxon vim, and so connect the seas?"

The engineer leaned back and thought most seriously. He thought for many moments before he spoke:

"The French Canal lies farther south and makes a longer detour between the two coasts of the United States. Its climate is unhealthful, a tremendous factor in construction and a serious one in maintenance. It is projected through a streak of land between the continents not fitted for a good and permanent waterway. The stability of the deep cuttings and the control of the floods are yet problematical for a sea level canal. As a high level canal, it is not to be compared with the Nicaraguan. Undoubtedly we could connect the seas in a practical way more quickly by completing the Panama Canal, if we could get it, than by any other method, but the route of the Panama Canal is not the one which should have been chosen for the wedding of the oceans. The Nicaragua route offers the best facilities, because across the mountain ranges Nature had offered tempting natural invita-

tions for man's handiwork, and because, with such close connections and such political relations and such vast natural advantages to be utilized under latest modern methods, the Nicaragua route is far preferable as affording a surety that the results sought will follow sensible effort. It has also a salubrious country of large extent, capable of a high industrial development, which adds a local factor of safety to the revenues and better insures its military protection."

"I think I understand," said Strong. "I have already become acquainted through your preliminary reports, with the nature of the situation and of the difficulties to be overcome. How soon can we overcome them? I'm going to ask a great many questions."

"Well, I'll try to answer you," said the great engineer.

The other thought a moment: "Tell me as nearly as you can decide at once, how much money and how much time will be required for the building of the canal, a deep war-ship canal, taking the Nicaragua route across the Isthmus."

The engineer leaned back and pressed his

left hand upon his eyes. He reflected for perhaps two minutes, then he said:

"One hundred million dollars, and fifteen hundred days."

The Commissioner was pleased. "That's what I wanted," he said. "Just such an answer to just such a proposition. Now, suppose you have two hundred million dollars to operate with, within how short a time can the canal be built?"

"Within just half of fifteen hundred days. That is, in seven hundred and fifty days," said the engineer.

"With four hundred million dollars," said the Commissioner, and he had risen in his seat and the look upon his face was becoming mightily earnest now, as he leaned forward. "How soon can you do it?"

The engineer hesitated. "I can't divide the time as equally as before," he said. "There is a limit even to the power of money. There are material limitations. With a billion dollars at command I couldn't build a canal in a month. There is a certain point where the balance comes. Let me figure on this."

There was a long pause and the engineer made many computations. He spoke at last:

"I would not quite guarantee it," he said. "with my present brief estimates, but, supposing the financial resources to be absolutely unlimited, the work might—mind I say only 'might'—be rushed through in eighteen months, and if weather conditions are favorable, you may save a little on that, or, otherwise, lose some. But lives would be sacrificed and millions squandered to save the days."

"Good!" exclaimed the Commissioner, "Good! It shall be done. Now give me some details."

"The first thing to be done," said the engineer, "in entering upon the construction of the canal, was to make an entrance across the bar at Greytown into the lagoon. This bar had a depth of only four feet, and even lighterage was precarious. The lagoon inside had from twelve to eighteen feet of water. This required a sea-going dredge and some pile drivers and a quantity of piles to maintain the sides of the channel. After this a preliminary channel was to be made to a depth of eighteen or twenty feet and a dock constructed to make it feasible for the ordinary vessel engaged in the Caribbean trade to make a landing. In the meantime the eleven miles of railway, ex-

tending from the landing up to the site of the first lock in the Deseado Valley, was to be repaired, put in serviceable condition, extended for six miles up to the main divide and the rock exposure at the falls of the Deseado River. We have done the work!"

"That's where you are now? What next?"

"We have begun quarrying at the falls to get stone for the breakwaters. A dredge is being erected at the site of the first lock about ten miles from the sea coast, and a second dredge has started in at the sea shore, and a preliminary cut will be made throughout the length of the tide-level canal across the Costal plain. The northern breakwater, extending for a mile or more into the Caribbean, has been started from the rock quarried at the divide cut."

"How about the work toward the west?"

"While these operations are being initiated a branch railroad line is being extended over to the San Juan River to the proposed dam site for the purpose of hauling earth and rock from the divide cut and depositing the same in the embankment across the San Juan Valley."

"That I suppose will largely solve the problem of transporting the supplies?"

"Yes, in part. The existing steamboats on the San Juan River have been taking some railroad supplies and materials up the stream for the purpose of constructing a railroad along its northern bank up to the navigable waters above Toro, which are virtually an extension of Lake Nicaragua, and this service is soon to be reinforced by tugs and barges.

"This railroad will be extended across the main divide to a junction with the railroad already described, as soon as practicable, so as to bring Lake Nicaragua into reliable communication with the port at Greytown. Tugs and barges will also be placed upon the lake to take sufficient supplies to the west shore so as to enable a harbor to be constructed at the mouth of the River Lajas, and thence a railroad will be built for nineteen miles down to the Pacific as soon as possible."

"Will you not be working at Brito?"

"It was decided to send a sea-going dredge around Cape Horn, and she is ready to start. This is for the purpose of opening a channel across the beach at Brito, forming a preliminary harbor in the tidal reach of the Rio

Grande at that point. The object is to produce from sea to sea as quickly as possible, a line of transportation, consisting of two pieces of railroad, one from the port at Greytown to the navigable waters of Lake Nicaragua, and the other from Lake Nicaragua to Brito, with an intermediate car ferry system by which trains can be run from sea to sea, connecting at the two ports with steamship lines of moderate tonnage. When this line of transportation has been provided the work as a whole can be undertaken. While this line of transportation is being provided, considerable progress will have been made in the laying out and installing work on the Atlantic divide—the diversion of streams—so as to permit dry cuttings, and the beginning of the embankment across the valley."

"How about this diversion of streams? Is it an important feature?"

"The diversion of these streams will be a matter of great moment in view of the tremendous effects of probable rainfall. It is work which must be done."

"How about the human beings to be utilized. In what manner will they be fed and sheltered?"

"That problem is one of the most important but easily solvable. Progress has already been made incidental to the preliminary work, buildings must be put up for housing the workmen and a hospital service organized, and a police service as well. This is not money wasted. The advantage of rigid provisions for health was clearly shown in the history of that monster work, the Sanitary Canal of Chicago, where, for the first time in the history of great public works, no epidemic disorders of any kind occurred, and the death rate was less than in the best wards of Chicago, notwithstanding an average force of seven to eight thousand men was employed for three years, with, perhaps, a greater number of non-workers in the valley. In Nicaragua these provisions will have to be still more rigid, extending to the point of sumptuary laws which shall regulate, in a measure, the conduct of men, and put the alcoholic liquor traffic under absolute control. No one thing is recognized as so detrimental to health in tr pical countries as the unrestrained liquor habit.

"It is supposed, also," continued Savage, "that in the clearing out of the work there will be a free zone from sea to sea, where there

shall be no tariff restrictions, and where all shall be under the absolute police and sanitary control of those who are carrying out the work. This is a requisite."

"Do you feel confident," said Strong, looking Savage squarely in the face, "do you feel confident that you are the man for the place? It may be that I know you are, but that doesn't matter. Are you sure that you are the man to work with me in a way that is practically certain of success, for two nations?"

The engineer's moustache quivered a little, and he spoke somewhat emphatically:

"I, and I alone, know best what is to be done and how to do it. If you don't believe it, you and the two nations may go to ——. But I won't make a fool of myself if I can help it. I haven't helped it always. But I know what I'm talking about."

Strong, the dominant, was mightily pleased. He reached out his hand to Savage. "I haven't any doubt," he said, "but I wanted to be sure that you were sure of yourself. Now, shall we do new things? Will there become necessary the adoption of new methods, recourse to new devices, if we are to attain certain ends within a certain time? Will the

method of the work in any way be so experimental as to involve a risk?

"Hardly, with the element of economy eliminated. What would be folly, commercially speaking, is folly no longer. But there are limitations to overcome. The expense involved will be stupendous. For instance, there must be an enormous concentration of appliances and labor in the three miles of the eastern divide. Here the force cannot be increased beyond a certain point without slight return for great expenditure, and even a double-track railroad service from either end and with all the switches that it may be feasible to locate will not be adequate for handling the material out of this cut in a short time.

"The element of embankment across the valley is also most formidable, requiring the movement of vast quantities of material, as well as time for the same to become settled and compacted so as to be safe. As the integrity of the entire project depends upon the faithful carrying out of this embankment work, it is a matter that cannot be slighted.

"Again, after the main work is fully organized, it will be feasible to inaugurate night

work. This will not double the output because night work is less efficient than day work, and the whole period of twenty-four hours cannot be utilized in actual working, as time periods of rest are required which are taken advantage of to clean boilers, overhaul and inspect machinery and make temporary repairs, so, at the best, the actual manual working period cannot be quite cut in half. But I cling to my proposition."

"We'll accept it!" almost shouted the Commissioner as he sprang to his feet, "and we'll show the world how work is done. I believe in you and I hope you'll come to believe in me. Money and men are mine to provide. You shall have them. Extraordinary utilization of forces is yours. I have no doubts!" And the men shook hands.

CHAPTER X.

HOW A HEMISPHERE WAS SPLIT.

And then began the battle of man with the material. Then began the struggle of two strong men with the forces of nature. Then began the ripping of a way across a hemisphere. There was no rest for man or beast. Understanding each other, relying upon each other, Strong and Savage worked together in a way titanic, and their spirit infused itself into all beings about them, into subordinate officials, into contractors whose fortunes were at stake and even into the laborers who dug and delved. It was a magnificent exhibition of what the spirit of conquest is. It was a time of tearing.

While it was fine it was a strain, but there was no lack in the contagion of desire for doing things. Even I, burdened with a thousand clerical duties, became as fierce an enthusiast as any one of the hosts gathered between the two oceans and talked loudly and hopefully after supper. Already Savage had

some seven thousand men at work; already the harbor on the Atlantic Coast had been made practicable and the railroad was in good shape from the harbor to the base of the first rugged operation. Nothing had been done at the west end of the canal, but the great dredge, the biggest ever made, sailed the next day to make the perilous trip around the Horn and, if it survived the passage, to do its work at Brito.

It was quite an event that morning when the Musquash, for so the great dredge had been christened, left the harbor. She was an enormous thing, very broad and very long and with great sea-riding capacity and she was towed by one of the fastest and most powerful and seaworthy tugs in all the world, yet the outcome of her trip was a doubtful thing. The seas are high and the winds are sharp and the rocks are treacherous off the southern point of the Western Hemisphere; nevertheless the tug and the Musquash sailed away as gallantly as if they, combined, were some great warship going off to subdue some little rebellion somewhere. Perhaps it is as well here as in another place to tell the brief story of their journey. They reached with much tribu-

lation, but with no great mishap, the south end of the eastern coast of South America. Then came the life-risking turning of the cold, turbulent corner, the accomplishment of which meant a haven and success. The story of that turning I heard later from the captain of the tug.

The seas were mountainous, but the great tug was stanch and the huge steel cable the best ever made, and as for the Musquash she was so long that she reached across from wave to wave, and so broad that she couldn't capsize under any ordinary circumstances. She wallowed and sloshed around beyond all possible wallowing of even the great warship Oregon in its famous trip in the Spanish war-time. The tug did reasonably well, and the big dredge plunged while prayers were being said by the few members of its crew who were sufficiently religious; and it made the dreaded curve. It rose up and dipped down the mountainous billows of the Horn and didn't sink, and eventually, after much floundering, bulged its way around until its nose sought the north and then came gradually day by day into calmer waters. Then those upon it knew they had but to labor patiently to the northward

across great lazy waves to the port of destiny, where, with its aid, a great work was to be done.

But the trip of the Musquash was merely an incident of the undertaking. The harbor had been completed and so had the railroad to the foot-hills. Even the docks were in comparatively good condition, and vessels sailing inward from the sea might be sure of ample soundings. The railroad was in comparatively decent shape up to the site of the first lock where great work was to be done in the Deseado Valley. Now the quarrying at the falls was to begin and the canal dug fiercely southwestward across the Costal plain. New subcontractors from all about the world were gathered; steps were taken for augmenting wisely, but on a tremendous scale, the army of men already at work. The telegraph was working night and day, for the mail was too slow a thing for such an undertaking. With it all there were a thousand curious blunders from the beginning, though they did not count in the end.

There came the sub-contractors who had invested their thousands and who had made vast gambles. They came there, arrogant and

overbearing, from Chicago and New York, even from England, red-faced and full-bellied, and hard headed hirers of working-men by the thousand, and they came down like the Assyrian with his purple and gold, and the manner in which the demeanor of these great contractors was changed within a day or two was a sight for gods and men. They had done this and that, while the temperature had played with and petted them and their men all the way between 100 above and 10 below zero. It was different now. They came, as they thought, knowing all about the business. They had still something to learn. They had to learn that there is a difference between a heavily booted and heavily undershirted spade-handling person of the temperate zone and another spade-handler, more dusky, with no overplus of energy or industry, and with nothing on him but an excellent head of hair and part of a pair of trousers. But they were worthy of consideration, this army of sub-contractors, these men who had done things, and what followed their advent was curious and good.

Dominant over all were Strong and Savage; dominant beneath them were the great original contractors, earnest and enthusiastic but

fortune-seeking and having legal rights which could not be easily gainsaid. Of course they could and would have been swept away like straws when came the Commissioner representing the two nations, had that been necessary, but as it was, they were looked upon as valuable and intelligent factors in the accomplishment of the enterprise and as men whose reward must necessarily be great. Recognizing the outcome, and subordinating themselves readily, they were, without exception, vigorous and practical helpers from the beginning to the end.

From Strong and Savage flamed out the understanding that a certain militarism must be followed, and I feel proud in saying that I myself was a most ferocious sort of adjutant general in distributing all commands. But a little time passed before from Strong, the head, representing government, and Savage, the general in the field, came an understanding to the lowliest native water-carrier at any point on hill-side or in valley, in all the way between the oceans, that any sort of order must be obeyed unquestioningly, whether it were an order for men to risk their lives in certain undermining or an order to prolong

their lives by observing certain laws of cleanliness and taking certain medicines when so commanded.

They came, the Porto Ricans, on colliers and on transports, earnest and preposterously enthusiastic Americans, though under the American flag so briefly, brown and hardened and lazy, adapted to the climate, which was almost theirs, but as yet unaccustomed to continuous work throughout the day and not at all to working in the night, though as the event proved, they more than met the expectation. They were housed and fed and cared for as they had never been housed and fed and cared for before. Notwithstanding the tremendous physical labor required of them, and forced from them, they thrived under it physically, and acquired under it, despite themselves, what was to them, individually, a fortune. They and the others, the half naked laborers, in mud and rock and sun and shade were not those to whom came the greatest mortality. That came to the men who overlooked them, to the men with transit, and theodolite and pith helmet, to the young, enthusiastic sub-engineers from America and England, all of whom worked careless of

hours or weather, many of whom drank too often and too deeply of bad water and strong liquors; and those who died earned fairly, though they lost it, such recompense as came ultimately to those who lived.

Ah! but we worked, and we worked all along the line and the onslaught began at the east and midway and upon the Pacific Coast. Before the Musquash had poked her triumphant, but unhandsome nose into the water to assist in transforming it into Brito harbor, there had come from San Francisco all that the great dredge needed in the furtherance of her work, and there had also reached Brito vast supplies and five thousand men. Savage's second in the engineering work, one James Cromwell, fit in force and stubbornness to be ranked with his old namesake Oliver, was there to take command, and there with unlimited resources supplied from San Francisco for use as early as we could make connection across the Isthmus.

They made their harbor, Cromwell and his forces, a harbor which was a real one, and they dug and dammed and hurried frantically to meet us when we should have reached the eastern crust, upholding Lake Nicaragua.

Their work was as good as ours. Once, just after our temporary transportation system had been established, Cromwell sent to Savage the curt message:

"I can use five thousand more men."

He had them within two weeks. He had provided for them, and for their work all things necessary, and he doubled his results. He met us fairly at the down-dip of the western slope.

So they fought toward the lake well, those fellows on the Pacific side, and we upon the eastern slope, who were straining every nerve to send to them every day all they could need in their hurrying enterprise, sent to them at the same time jeering and contemptuous comments, telling them that they had not comprehended the first principles of digging canals or riding over mountain crests, or diverting rivers or crossing lakes. In return would come from Cromwell the most insolent and at the same time supplicating messages. He would defy his superiors to their teeth, and in the same breath ask for enormous masses of fresh supplies and working men. Cromwell was a man. He was just the five foot and eight-and-one-half inches of entity to come up

with a rush from the Pacific to Lake Nicaragua and leave a great canal behind him. He was a man. He died six weeks after his work was accomplished.

As for us on the eastern side, who were playing a greater game, we were squandering money and yet we were not squandering it. Where a thousand men, as we wedged them, could do more swiftly the work of a hundred with more room, we hired them and imported them. We diverted the rivers, we made our dams and we did the work as lastingly as if we had taken years for its accomplishment.

We clustered our thousands on the great rock saddles holding the lake from the lowlands, as bees, when swarming, are clustered on a hive, and along our ways of transport the locomotives snorted, not upon the two tracks Savage had talked of, but on six. At every available point where a man could work a man was working. Between the two oceans were gathered as many human beings of the acclimated sort as could labor without one being in another's way.

Strong raged and hurried and brought his men in tens of thousands. Savage raged and hurried and compelled his lieutenants, en-

gineers of standing from two continents, to force the contractors into accomplishing the ends sought here or there within certain days and certain hours. It was wonderful. There was an infectiousness to the vigor in the air. We made our way and we made it well and permanently, from the completed water highway on the level to the first lock and so on forward to the lake. After the carriage afforded by our first temporary highway from sea to sea, we literally climbed and ripped our way from the Atlantic plain to the Lake Nicaragua level. We made our own lakes and our locks as the great engineer had defined the work, and there came at last a day when we knew we could lift the greatest warship from the Greytown harbor into Nicaragua Lake and from there let her down easily and gently into the Pacific Ocean!

The canal was done and it was a good one, a waterway to last through all the ages, the result of an enterprise to affect the boundaries and the welfare of the nations.

So the oceans were joined. So was made a road across a half world for the warship and the merchantman. Ten thousand miles of weary travel around an inhospitable coast was

saved to the mariner. The ships of the United States and Great Britain had ready for them a smooth pathway from sea to sea and now could sail around the globe at will and without delay.

Millions of treasure and priceless human lives had been expended in the gigantic work of making this pathway for mankind, but not in vain. Because of it bread shall be plentiful throughout the world. Famine shall cease to threaten any branch of mankind, for the granaries of the North American Continent can now pour their treasures into ships, which, sailing from the great lakes and long rivers into the ocean, will find a way ready for them to the Pacific. The sea which bears the navies of the world on its bosom so lightly—the sea—the great carrier of man's burdens—exacts no such tribute of money as does man's contrivance of two parallel bars of steel upon which roll great wagons drawn by steam.

The great work was finished and the people of England and the United States were ready to congratulate Strong and Savage on the completion of their tremendous task. But the celebration never came. Before the two great powers had time to dedicate the canal

with appropriate ceremonies and rejoicings, it was opened by the grim hand of war. Threatening iron ships were hurried along the new water way under orders to the ocean in which they were to meet and give battle, and so, without speech-making or banqueting, the career of the Nicaragua Canal as a stern factor in the history of the world began.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MUSTER.

The world is made of land and water, and of it water is three-fourths, if we may believe our geography lessons. The water has, with modern ships, become as traversable as the land, and the encounters of war forces, it was thought but lately by the wise, must be chiefly fought upon the seas. The water owners must be the world's owners. No more may the greatest of struggles be upon the land. No longer lies Armageddon—where the nations battle—in the vale of Esdraelon. It lies where the sea-fields give deep soundings.

One night, in Apia, in Samoa, a native girl came down a pathway. Coming up the pathway were seamen from warships in the harbor. There were three groups, the first German, the second American and the third English. They were all on their way to a drinking place in the foot-hills. The girl coming down, though brown, was clear-skinned and full breasted, and there were red flowers in her

hair. A German sailor, looking lustingly upon her, made a dash and seized her in his arms. An American sailor, none too unready for a fight, leaped forward to the rescue and there was trouble, and other German sailors came to the assistance of their comrade. The American group was the smaller of the two. It was not equal to a third of its opponents and affairs were becoming unpleasant for the Yankees when the English sailors in the rear, coming upon the scene and delighting in the prospect of a row, plunged in to aid their kinsmen. There was a most spirited battle upon the Samoan way. In the midst of it the German sailor who had seized the girl had faced his first adversary, while the girl fled toward the forest. There was a bout but of a moment between these two men, and then, in some unfortunate way, the hard fist of the American sailor caught the head of the German just beneath his ear, and the man thus smitten fell to the ground, stone dead. After the fighting was over and the dead man was buried by his comrades, a sullen spirit held sway among the Germans, while the English and Americans were boastful. There were sharp meetings between the German and American and English

consuls, and warships which could be called upon came and went. The attrition made a raw place. Out of necessity the matter was referred to the home governments, where the first sore became a broadening gangrene.

Meanwhile, one day in the waters close by Hongkong, an English ship, outbound and laden with teas, was run into by an incoming French cruiser and the English ship went down with all on board. The correspondence which ensued between the British and French authorities lacked all smoothness. The incident was as if someone had put a seltzer-like powder into water. There was a foaming.

Then came trouble of a serious nature between Russia and Japan and the United States over privileges in the Philippines granted by the latter country to the Island nation, trouble of a diplomatic nature only in the beginning, but which developed into something serious. The usual oiling processes of diplomacy failed to ease the friction. There were harsh passages and the scratched Russian showed the Tartar. All foresaw the inevitable. It was then came the Anglo-American alliance, if such it may be called.

Blood relationship and self-interest com-

bined to promote the coalition. The unpleasant past was forgotten, just as the Americans had forgotten the spirit which rose when North and South were arrayed against each other, and now thought of all that had taken place since 1812 rose vividly in the minds of each of the two peoples. To Americans came thought of the time in 1815 when the "Holy Alliance" of Russia, Austria and Prussia threatened and England balked its far-reaching plans; as came thought more earnest still of the same helpful friendship which, in the beginning of the Spanish-American war, balked the anti-American alliance so nearly formed. No Englishman forgot the day, in 1857, when bluff old Captain Josiah Tatnall, commanding the American squadron in Asiatic waters, saw the British vessels overmatched in battle with the Peiho forts and, walking his deck impatiently, finally roared out the now historic sentence: "Blood is thicker than water," and, in flagrant violation of all laws of neutrality, took his vessel sturdily into the action and was, in the end, forgiven by his government. None forgot the day in 1870 when there came to the British Captain Lorraine, of the Niobe, lying in

Jamaica harbor, news of the Virginius butchery and when, tearing up his anchor, and landing at Santiago before the tragedy was completed, he threatened to bombard the city, and so saved the lives of the Americans not yet murdered. None forgot the dreadful day in Apia harbor, when ships were going down before the hurricane and from the Trenton and Calliope the British and Americans cheered each other in the face of death. None failed to remember the events of the bombardment of Alexandria, nor did those of the navies especially forget the incidents of a thousand hardy rescues and a thousand seamen's frays in port. There were potent ties of marriage, too, and immediate kinship and, above all, the instinct of a common language, code of laws, religion and education and plan for the world's future. It was "Hands all round," as Tennyson had written:

"Gigantic daughter of the West,
We drink to thee across the flood,
We know thee most, we love thee best,
For art thou not of British blood?
Should war's mad blast again be blown,
Permit not thou the tyrant powers
To fight thy mother here alone,
But let thy broadsides roar with ours.

Hands all round!
God the tyrant's cause confound!
To our great kinsmen of the West, my friends,
And the great name of England round and round."

The terms of the combination were not strict and made rather an agreement than an alliance offensive and defensive. It was defensive alone. Neither nation feared any other single nation on the face of the earth, but it was agreed that if either Great Britain or the United States were attacked by more than one nation, resistance should be mutual. No aid was implied in any war where either the United States or Great Britain was the assailant. A regard for the provisions of the Bulwer-Clayton treaty already gave each equal rights in the use of the Nicaragua Canal, though this had been more definitely agreed upon in a later arrangement. But blood and the trade of Asia were the telling factors, blood first. Now conditions made the alliance active. Warm were the Atlantic cables. The forces were ranging themselves. All civilized humanity knew what would be the dividing lines, the lines between the Latin and its divergent races, still living in a past, still constant in the sort of slavery which comes when church may

interfere with state—between these and all the branches from the Teutonic stem. There was uncertainty as to what would happen. The nations must look out for themselves. The issue was defined upon the instant because the circumstances leading to the definition had been in a wavering equation for years. It was only understood that the nations would be arrayed against each other cleanly and distinctly, and that a great struggle was to begin. Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Holland, all races of seamen, knew their place and took it.

The Japanese, that strange new development from an ancient stock, were swiftest of all in their formation for the emergency. They had been working well upon their navy and it was disproportionately large, considering the resources of the Island Empire, but was well officered and well provided and a powerful factor to be considered. It was soon in shape and the noses of thirty warships pointed at once for the western entrance to the Nicaragua Canal.

It was wonderful, the manner in which those little Japs conducted themselves. There was work upon land as well as sea; there was swift accumulation in their coast cities of vast

stores to support any army, and a land force of one hundred thousand men, well equipped and wild with enthusiasm, with transports awaiting them, was organized within so short a time that it puzzled the generals of other nations. The new-old country set a pace that was barely equaled by the civilization it had but lately imitated. Then came in, too, a new element—one not heretofore much considered in the affairs of the world—the great Australasian force.

They have money in Sidney and they have money in Melbourne and in half a thousand other places, and they have money away back in the reaches where men have bred sheep and other animals, and have made Australia but a second United States. Better yet, they have men, and the manner in which these Australians came to the front was beautiful to see.

They had owned no navy heretofore, but the Anglo-Saxon, tossed away into strange lands, always develops an inventive genius, as the Yankee has—and the Australian is but a Yankee. The Australian is lank and lean, and inquiring and knowing, and it is best not to oppose him, and the manner in which he made a navy swiftly, or, rather, the manner

in which he had made a navy a year or two earlier than was really needed, looking for contingencies, will ever be one of the fine things told in the history of the world. The Australian navy sailed proudly for the western end of the Nicaragua Canal as the great Japanese squadron left its home port. And South Africa sent a warship and a little army.

Canada had been at work. The great Dominion, now hand in hand with, and assisted by its neighbor across the border, had built its own warships—and they were good ones—and had built them on the Atlantic coast where they were immediately available. Halifax fairly blossomed with the efflorescence of thirteen-inchers, and half a hundred places along the Canadian-Atlantic coast were as apprehensive as were half a thousand along the American-Atlantic coast lest disaster should come to them in the event of a wrong ending to a great war.

As for the gathering of the British forces upon the water, there is but little to be said. Throughout the later centuries Great Britain has ridden the seas well and knows its pathways thoroughly. Now she swiftly gathered her vast armament, seeking only for her aid the

sea-going armament of her kinsmen; and the admirals planned together.

The Latin combination was strong and one cannot but in a way respect its coherence, even in its decadence. Milliards were spent upon the navy of France; it was vast and well equipped and in any of the casual evolutions of any one of its parts, a striking thing to look upon. But, somehow, rarely has the Latin fought wisely upon the water. A great navy had France gathered together in competition with that of the ambitious German Emperor, who had taxed his subjects more deeply after the navy became his fad, and had built a fleet of warships by no means to be ignored, even by Great Britain.

Meanwhile Austria had done her best. Unwilling taxes from subjects who disagreed between themselves, from Slav and Czech and German, had brought in their vast returns, and the navy represented the still vast importance of an empire dwindled by lack of force at its head, a force diminished by devoteeism and inter-marriage; but they had a navy of good battleships, manned by those who could fight not deftly, but to the death.

The Italian added a more dangerous force.

By great exertions, though impoverished, the Italian Government had become possessed of a navy which was excellent. Its ships were not numerous, but they were modern, well equipped and well manned. The navy of Italy was one of the elements most considered by the naval commanders of the Anglo-Saxons who were to meet it. The poverty of the Italian Government left some things much desired undone, but, on the whole, a fine showing had been made at sea.

From the everlasting Slav came the greatest danger. They can build warships well now at Odessa or Sebastopol, and they were building them well in what had been Chinese waters from the time the idea first dawned upon the Russian Government that the war of the nations was near at hand. Their railroad rights of way had been bought or fought for, and in one way or another, had been established, until between the Black Sea and St. Petersburg there were no difficulties save in the mere item of time or transportation. Meanwhile the shrewdest diplomats of all the world, for such the Russians are, by turns dallied with or bullied the Sultan. They won his ear and won away his judgment, and then—God help him

for he is about paying the consequences now —they won the right of way for their great fleet from the Black Sea down past Constantinople and through the Golden Horn and past the frowning forts, the heavy fire of which could, with modern artillery, destroy any fleet in the world. And so they came into the Aegean Sea and out into the Mediterranean, where they could join the fleets of Austria and Italy and France, where they waited, near the Pillars of Hercules, preparatory to seeking, when the navies were massed, the open Atlantic, and crushing the gathering fleet of the Anglo-Saxons. This was the sea movement.

Spain, the shorn, had meanwhile sought her sister Portugal, and racial and religious influences had brought them recently even closer together than they had been for centuries. They were not strong, but they were fierce and they wanted two things—the Inquisition again and the abolition of the Anglo-Saxon, the creature who had made trouble for Alva and for the Armada and taken Cuba and Porto Rico and the Philippines. The peasants, patriotic and non-understanding, contributed their pesetas amazingly, and the treasuries of the nations of the peninsula, now united save

in name, were full. They, too, built a navy which was not to be despised, manned by gallant gentlemen and chivalric, with a cruel streak in their makeup. They united at Barcelona and joined the gathering fleet.

Meanwhile a portion of the Russian fleet, that is to say, the two effective squadrons lying in Pacific waters, was seeking eagerly an opportunity to take part in the coming fray upon the Atlantic ocean. But little chance had this fleet. The Japanese and the Australians might cross the western continent at the neck of the hour-glass, but none else could. None dared make even a pretense at the attempt. Huge fortresses, with great guns and a thousand submarine devices under control of the most expert American engineers, controlled the entrance to the canal. To enter that passage was not wisdom nor bravery, but dramatic suicide for any group of things afloat, however armed and armored. In the East the iron hand of England held Suez and the canal. There was nothing left for the Asiatic-Russian squadron save to sail for cold and stormy southern seas, and round the Horn, in time, if possible, to be of some avail in an emergency.

Now millions of Americans realized, doubtless for the first time, the strength of the Anglo-American position. A look at the map of the world showed to even peaceable citizens, however unversed in war, the tremendous advantage these allied powers possessed in the ownership and absolute control of the Suez and Nicaraguan Canals, and the bones of Beaconsfield might almost have stirred to life again as the rich result of his labors became so tremendously apparent.

The men who had planned and wrought so to make the way across the American barrier were happily alive to rejoice over the timely ending of their work, and to see its usefulness to the Anglo-Saxon race fully tested and triumphantly established. No longer did selfish corporations or long-bearded would-be statesmen, with monetary or agrarian fads, have influence in the national legislature, and the spirit there was one of generous patriotism. The navy had been fostered until it was now a gigantic fighting machine. Never had it been so strong, so well-manned, well equipped, or more ably commanded; never was it, from admiral to seaman, so filled with enthusiasm, loyalty and the spirit of war as now.

CHAPTER XII.

APPLETON BECOMES DESTRUCTIVE.

From the moment when war became imminent—when all men could feel its hot breath of disturbing power—Appleton had been as one possessed by an idea of such absorbing strength as to drive out all others. The first day after the great news came he said little; nevertheless, I well knew what was in his mind.

At night, after hours of exhausting work in the air machine, during which it behaved with remarkable docility and to our great satisfaction, Appleton spoke. We were lying on the grass under the stars, and I could not see his face, but his voice had the vibrations of earnest power in it.

"War is coming," he said, "and with it our opportunity. The machine we have here can be made the most destructive force in the world to-day. We must bend every sinew of body and every energy of mind to fit it for war on land or sea. You shall go to Washington—start to-morrow morning—offer the air

machine to the Government, and prepare the way before us. I will stay here and get everything ready."

"Appleton," I said, "what do you intend to do with the machine? Of course I will go to-morrow, but you must spend most of the night at work getting me ready."

I had, naturally, thought already of using Appleton's invention for war purposes, particularly as a scout, so to speak. It was much more suited for purposes of observation than the balloons in service already, especially as it need not like them be hampered by the wire rope attaching it to the earth, or to a ship, when used at sea, and was not, by reason of its size and shape, such a target for the enemy's shots as a balloon with its towering air-bag. What arrested my attention was Appleton's allusion to the possibilities of making our contrivance a destructive force. Here I needed light.

We went into our work-room, and lighting the lamps sat down at our pine-board table. Then Appleton showed me his plans and explained them. I was convinced before an hour was over that if we could only keep our air machine under control in any half satisfactory

manner when the hour of action should come, we should hold the fate of armies and navies in our hands.

Briefly stated, Appleton's plan was to carry in the air machine packages containing charges of high explosives, rise far above the enemy, and at will, by a device worked from the air machine, detach the charges. Coming from the altitude we could easily attain, a mile or more, our bombs would shatter anything and everything they touched by the mere natural force accumulated in their fall, to say nothing of the explosive contents of our missiles. Especially in naval warfare would Appleton's plan be valuable, and as the first great battles of the approaching war would be naval, Appleton was anxious to try conclusions at sea, and at once.

The inventor's plans were perfectly feasible —that I knew from my experience with the machine—and they had that simplicity which is often the amazing characteristic of great and daring innovations.

Afterwards came to us both, of course, thoughts of the danger which we must encounter in managing and using the machine as a battle-ship of the air, but so fascinating was

the work, so tremendous were its consequences, and so exciting was its nature, that we could not dwell long on the idea of personal risk, even when we were planning it, and when once our real activity began there was no room for any thought but of our present duty.

It is a great experience to be for hours in some situation where what is to be done is the absorbing, controlling thing, allowing no other thought, act, or feeling. This goes far toward making that joy of battle which soldiers feel in deadly conflicts. The mind, and all sensations and emotions are concentrated upon a given point. The private soldier has not even to decide what he will do. He is just an ear to listen and an arm to strike. The officer, of whatever grade, is or should be the same, up to the commander-in-chief, with all his energies bent upon one thing alone, to direct well the struggle going on about him.

As for us, I thought—while I tossed uneasily upon my bed in the hours after Appleton had bidden me good-night—as for us, all we would have to do would be to go up quietly and quickly in the air-ship, find our way to the point we were directed to attain above the

enemy, and cut a wire. Then, when our stock of ammunition was exhausted, or we were recalled by our commander, we must come down. Aye! There was the rub! But as Appleton had said, it was better not to think about that. Of course we could get down all right, anyone could do that,—the thing to think about was the most effective way of doing our work. And that was simple enough, too.

I was a most set and determined man when I arrived in Washington a day or two later, and, as there were in the capital before me many other men of like earnestness and determination of purpose, it was a hard fight to get a hearing from the over-worked authorities of the army and navy. It was not a long struggle, though fierce. Before many days were over I had enlisted on my side some of the men who had been associated with George Strong and John Savage in the Nicaragua Canal work and who knew me well. Together once more, shoulder to shoulder, we, comrades in a former struggle, made our fight, and soon I had the satisfaction of leaving for home with promises of substantial recognition and co-operation from the Gov-

ernment. We were to have a practical trial in the United States navy, and in active service, too. If we could get ready we were to sail, taking our machine with us, in one of the war-ships of the great fleet preparing in New York harbor, and I had a very well defined opinion that we would be ready.

We settled down again to work. We were now keyed up to such efforts as we had never made before. There was a deadly earnestness about Appleton in these days. We worked and were happy.

As we toiled and rested, and toiled again, we studied the situation, our strongly moved natures responding readily to the war drama which was being played in its first scene around us. We thrilled with the spirit of patriotism which had given Americans baptism as of the ancient tongues of flame, while we felt too, in strong vibrations, the answering within us to the mighty Macedonian cry of race from across the sea.

It was fortunate for the great republic that it had at this time a President who was seemingly provided by the God of nations for the occasion, conservative but unafraid, a man of perception and tact but, withal, swift to de-

cide and act so as to compel movements quite beyond mere politic consideration. The blood of his race stirred within him and made him a patriot in the broader sense of the term.

The time had come to act and he did not make a mistake. He thought of the seventy-five thousand men called for by the great Lincoln at the beginning of the Civil war and of the length of time needed for preparing a greater army, as shown in the Spanish war, and he took his lesson from these experiences. In a message calmly worded but explaining clearly the nation's situation, and the fact that the nation's sons were needed, he called first for two hundred and fifty thousand volunteers.

The volunteers called for were apportioned among the states according to population. The call was issued on Tuesday, and Wednesday morning was effective. It had been anticipated and all day Tuesday there was excitement in city, and town and village, and farmers talked at the crossroads. The battle-bees were humming. By Tuesday noon the males of the nation knew what was required of them and the hum was a hum no longer, but a muffled roar. Things were happening fast now. Trade was neglected and from every-

where came the sound of band, or fife and drum, or bugle. Swift work was required, and there was no rest by night or day. Friday noon the first state reported to Washington its quota filled, and Saturday night found a report from every state in the Union, telling the same story. They had learned from the Spanish war. A quarter of a million volunteers were ready and as many more were clamorous for enlistment.

Then followed swiftly completer organizations in each state and there were scenes sometimes amusing, sometimes pathetic and always interesting. The veterans of the great Civil war, and of the more recent conflict, now suddenly became men of importance, although the Union veterans were mostly too old for service, and had been jeered at but lately for their pension drawing. Thousands of old men who had limped wearily in the procession of the last Decoration Day, now straightened instinctively their bent backs and exhibited a certain springiness even in their limping. The old fire came into their eyes again, and the old ring to their voices. In every town, great or small, these were among the drillmasters of

the brawny youth and men of vigor who were learning the first rudiments of war. Their influence was wonderful. They were men who had fought for a principle—and it was the same North and South. Never had vast legions of eager recruits better teachers physically and morally in the alphabet of organization. Not even a little town in all the land lacked one or more of these old soldiers and what they accomplished was something excellent. As for the soldiers of the then recent war with Spain they were now in the front rank and formed the nucleus.

Soon began from all quarters the movement toward the front. The authorities of the army and navy were well prepared and where the forces should go into camps had already been determined. The national capital became the center of a mighty gathering.

They came from every point of the compass. All means of transportation were taxed. Even the great inland seas were burdened to aid the movement. They came, the Americans. From the great northern tier of states came thousands of the sons of the hardy Norsemen who had found a home there and who now felt stirring within them the instinct of their

ancestors. There was place for them on land and sea. They made great regiments. Sailors were needed and they fed the warships with the progeny of the Vikings. Dark-eyed Louisianians, swarthy and black-moustached, soldiers by instinct, brought with them the blood of the Huguenots. Brown Texans, grandsons of such men as defended the Alamo, men who could ride fast and far and fight like the grizzly, were camped beside regiments as brawny and resolute from Kentucky and New England. The Pacific Coast and the Mississippi Valley and states of all the South and North sent forth their myriads of men as good, and an army inexperienced but eager was soon organized and prepared for active service.

Within a month from the time of the call the force of two hundred and fifty thousand men, well fed and prepared for movement, was being distributed according to a plan conceived.

At first, of course, there was a terrific storm of talk, spoken and written, for the newspaper is only printed talk. There were Anti-War Parties, and Peace Leagues, and all the noise of professional agitation. Old race hatreds revived and asserted themselves, and in some

quarters the ugly head of sectarian bigotry was raised, but the serpent's hiss was of little moment in the country the institutions of which were founded on the rock of religious freedom.

It seems to me that groups of people sometimes get foolish and unreasonable just as individuals do when digestion is out of order. In America the crust yelped with amazing clamor and endurance. The crust, you know the crust, the shell made up almost exclusively of importations and of those who needed the imported vote, yelped shrilly now, against the Anglo-American alliance, but the clamor of their voices was lost in the sound of fife and drum. It is curious, though, about the crust.

Below, were the real people. Above were the agitators,-and the politicians who traded on them. It would have been unimportant but that sometimes in the past the crust had carried with it the worthy elements beneath. It wasn't logical; it was opposed to all physical laws, but it sometimes happened politically. The really guilty fools in the United States were the politicians who figured only on what result in votes would follow their action at any time. After that the deluge.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTENING.

I have had a moderately well rounded out experience among what constitutes the rest of humanity; I ought to possess some degree of judgment regarding the comparative good or bad fortune of a human being at any particular time, and my estimate I hold correct when I say that I never passed a happier late spring and early summer than I did with Appleton in that crazy old building a few miles from the suburbs of Chicago, even at this time when we were working so feverishly to an end.

We didn't sleep very well; there wasn't any bath and I was uncomfortable and expressed my opinions volubly in the morning. We had water enough, though, and towels enough and so I could slap and scrub myself at sunrise and feel as if I were something like a remote acquaintance of a gentleman for the rest of the day.

After our early breakfast we would sit together and scheme, and in our scheming de-

veloped the venture of which I am telling, but the hard planning and work exhausted us, exhausted even Appleton. We worked each day until the cheap clock beside us said that it was after ten o'clock in the morning—I believe that we did most of our real thinking work before ten o'clock for we were both convinced that men think most cleanly and clearly in the morning—but at night we were experimenting in our air-machine until late, and that was good work too.

It's odd how little things blend with big things. A bluebird had a nest in an old oak stump, possibly twenty rods from the building in which we were working. There's hardly any bird that I love more than the bluebird. There is such a joyousness about the little fellow, and he comes here so early in the spring when there is sometimes ice on the very grass spear he carries in the making of his nest, and there is such blithesomeness to his short song, as if he were trying to say six or eight hopeful words together, "God bless us, and let her go Gallagher" that I like him. I noted closely the love affairs of the pair of birds, and admired the regularity of the little husband in feeding his spouse when the time

of setting upon the eggs began, and the perfect manner of his flight. The course of the wind shifts and changes easily upon the prairie within any fifty miles distance of the uprising evaporation of the great lakes. The bird living in this area must adapt himself to swift wind-drifts, and I watched him curiously, and with something of envious fellowship as he kept himself afloat in the air. It was so easy for him. I made a study of bird flight that summer and had a joyous life even when I wasn't hard at work with Appleton. To the west the prairie dipped and rose and was but a broad rolling expanse with hillocks and with creeks and crisscrossed with cheap highways, made at the least cost to the township, cleanly kept, but bare and white and hot in midsummer.

I used to stroll along these country roads and make friends with the chippy-birds and ground sparrows that shifted along just a little ahead of me, and whose nests I knew all about though they didn't think I did. I had great comfort with the quail, too. By the way, a really industrious and thoughtful female quail sometimes has as many as fifty children in a year. What I mean is this: she

sometimes lays as many as thirty eggs in one nest and, barring accidents, lets her children drift in time to have another nest and another brood. It's wonderful what a creator of charming little living things she is. As for her mate, though vain of his whistling, he's a model husband.

I can shut my eyes now and see the yellow green stretch of meadows down from Appleton's place toward the stream. I can see the chipmunks scurrying along the lower rails of the fence. I can hear the defiance of the blue-jays in the air. I can hear in the early morning the call of the meadow-lark which means so much in its hopefulness and buoyancy. Appleton's old barn of a place was built in the midst of an area where real life was. It's alll sentimental, maybe, but somehow I believe that, because of the reflection of all that was vivid and pulsating about us, we had better perceptions for the work before us than we could otherwise have had, and that possibly the dipping flight of the goldfinch or the blue-bird as he trimmed himself to the gale, may have remotely suggested to Appleton some contingency of the work we had in hand.

We got on well with our air-machine in

those days. Difficulties began to disappear under our constant hammering, and we grew buoyant and light of heart. The knowledge that we were soon going into active trial gave us the life of enthusiasm, and our work flourished accordingly.

One day, in the flush of the full summer, Mr. and Mrs. Daggart and Helen came early in the morning to see our experiments with the air-machine and to spend the day.

Helen begged to be taken up in the flying concern, but Appleton had shortly and plumply refused to allow it, and we had left the young lady sitting haughtily erect on the grass, refusing even to look at us as we rose in the sweet morning air and were gently wafted along by the south wind.

We had an ugly time of it before our show trip was over, and when we returned on foot, weary and excited, Mr. and Mrs. Daggart were warm in their congratulations that we were still alive and equally fervent in expressions of gratitude that Helen had not been with us. Helen herself said little but she looked somewhat anxiously at Appleton as he limped toward our shed to make himself presentable after the shaking up of the morning.

For the first time she saw and realized the danger of Appleton's enterprise and, all day after that, there rested upon the brave girl's face a little shadow.

It was still long before midday when we rested together in the shade of the air-machine as it lay on the flower-laden prairie grass. We had been eating a picnic breakfast, and were comfortably lying or sitting about, the generous hampers of dainties brought out by Mrs. Daggart adding much to the homely attractions of the occasion.

The meadows around us were full of bobolinks. Every few minutes one of the black and yellow-white fellows would rise and flutter and sing, and then fall back again upon some tall weed or bush, and we were watching and listening to this jolliest of birds in the intervals of lazy talk.

"The bobolink is the American nation's bird," said I. "A bird so happily built by Providence that he grows with the growth of meadows and so must increase with the extension of the cultivated country. It is the happily-plucked-out piece of original buoyancy among living things destined to live with nature's changes. The queer part of it all is

that the creature which inspires the soul in spring and early summer, later in the season inspires the stomach. The angel and the butcher shake hands and are content."

"What is all this nonsense?" said Mr. Daggart, looking up from the full length position he held on a Navajo rug.

"About angels and butchers shaking hands—" continued Mrs. Daggart.

"Our bobolink, Mr. and Mrs. Daggart, and fellow citizens, if you will allow me to proceed, —the same singing bird of June that you see there whirling around in musical ecstacy, becomes himself a gorging gourmand and, in consequence, the prey of gourmands, every year. These birds gather in great brown flocks every autumn and fly south. On the Potomac marshes they are shot by thousands and served at dainty tables beneath the shadow of the capitol. On the restaurant bills of fare they figure as reed-birds. Then the myriads that escape go farther south and devastate the rice fields. There they are killed and sold as rice-birds to feed the markets north and south. Later they fly to the West Indian Islands where they are eaten and appreciated as the butter-bird. Then follows their great exploit

—the greatest flight known to be taken by small birds—the journey straight away from the West Indies to Venezuela, or somewhere thereabout. There they stay awhile, and millions of them drift southwest until in our own autumn months they are in the Argentine Republic."

"Will someone bring us a map—" interrupted Helen, a naughty twinkle in her eyes

But I would not be stopped; raising my voice to full lecture pitch, I finished:

"Now follows the return trip, over the same route, and again the army of birds ravages the rice fields, the young plants this time, and by way of the reedy rivers they come north, arriving early in June to charm men again just as they have for countless Junes before!"

"The bobolink is a great bird," assented Appleton, "but that is no reason, Jack, why you should make him an excuse for burdening us with useful information. It is too hot, for one thing—"

"I protest, Mr. Wentworth"—this from Mrs. Daggart—"I want to hear more about the bobolink. It is the most characteristic American bird, I think."

"Well," broke in Appleton, "somehow the

duffer has an American quality in his way; he extends himself, he is joyous, he makes the world better; he takes all chances and he does those two great things which are the fruit of the great things of this particular globe floating in space. He dies enormously, but he multiplies more. The English up-fluttering lark, telling things to those below, is good; the European nightingale, making the night better, is good, but—and of course I am but a crank, born with him and fond of him—I insist that the American bobolink is the one great poet-reaching and man-reaching bird of all the world. He is at the same time the Anglo-Saxon and Viking of all the birds of all the world. He breeds in the far north, he raids all the intermediate space and there is none other among all the birds of the earth who is like unto him."

And we all sat still for awhile, and the bobolink gurgled and pitched and crowned the day with animated joy.

"Mr. Appleton, what is the name of your air-engine?" It was Helen that broke the silence. "Let us name it to-day. It ought to have the name of a bird. Would you call it 'The Bobolink?' "

Appleton looked at me "It has at present certain motions like that of a bobolink," I returned, "but I don't know that I approve of them."

"You mean that pitching downward suddenly," said the inventor calmly, "but that will be all right, Wentworth—"

"Oh, yes, of course," I had to say; but my lame arm grumbled where it received its last hard dig because of the said pitching propensity of Appleton's great machine.

Miss Daggart said, innocently enough, to all appearance: "It reminded me more of a goose than of any other bird, last Thursday, when you were hauling it out of the muddy river."

"The Wild Goose," said Appleton, taking up the gauntlet instantly, "is the most wonderful bird on its wings in all the world. It wings from the tropics to the Arctic Circle and back every year, and has no rival in the air. The name of the machine shall be 'The Wild Goose.'"

"I wish you might get some such steering apparatus as a wild goose has, Appleton," said I, "and find out how to use it."

Helen had her lap full of clover blossoms, white and red. She suddenly stretched her arm

out and took from a willow basket near her father's elbow a bottle; alas! a cobwebbed bottle of old wine, and I see Mr. Daggart's dismayed face yet. The girl rose, holding in one hand the gathered folds of her white gown with the clover-blossoms ready, in the other the wine. In a moment she turned, and crash went the neck of the bottle on the frame-work of the machine, while, as far as she could throw them over and around it, the flowers were scattered.

"Gallant wanderer of the air," she cried. "I crown thee with clover blossoms and christen thee 'Wild Goose!' "

"Gallant 'wobbler' of the air," I muttered.

I had leaped and stumbled, and I was sprawling at the feet of Beauty when this episode was over. I had to endure much chaffing over my vain attempt to save the good wine from its untimely end. Only Mr. Daggart sympathized with my efforts. He refused to be comforted. He had carefully chosen from his cherished supply, "one decent bottle," as he himself said in all frankness. This he had placed with the others in one of the baskets before he left home. Helen, by fell misfortune, had chanced to place her eager hand on this particular bottle when the

thought of naming the machine possessed her, and so came mishap to an important feature of the old gentleman's repast.

The day passed with much laughter and jollity, and evening found our little company still together on the prairie. With night came a subduing influence, and there was talk of all the serious problems that were occupying the world near and far, and of course much talk of the war, which was coming on so swiftly.

Appleton had already announced to Helen his determination to throw himself and his fortunes into the war, and as we talked, the realities of his enterprise, its terrific dangers and chances, took hold of the poor girl. The lovers had drawn somewhat aside from the rest of us, and for some time their low earnest voices, heard at intervals in our pauses of conversation, had shown that their talk was on themes which moved them deeply.

It had grown quite dark. The place was lighted only by the stars, and the uncertain gleam of a lantern or two which swung from our porch, when suddenly Appleton called to me:

"Wentworth, what was that old Roumanian poem you were repeating the other day—the

one you say is the best of all patriotic poems? Let us hear it."

I repeated the poem, out there in the darkness:

The soldier dying spake:
"Tell my mother dear to pray for me,
To pray for me with folded hands,
And my bride in the village there."
They buried him on the battle-field
And the sun looked down and smiled,
And the flowers bloomed where he was laid
And were glad they blossomed there.
And the village women prayed,
With folded hands they prayed for him,
And the soldier spake from his deep, dark grave:
"I am content."

And when the wind in the tree-tops blew
The soldier said:
"Did the banner flutter then?"
"Not so, my hero," the wind replied,
"The banner fluttered not;
Thy comrades of old have borne it hence,
Have borne it in triumph hence."
And the soldier spake from his deep, dark grave:
"I am content."

And the flocks and the shepherds pass,
And the soldier spake again:
"Is that the sound of the battle's roar?"
"Not so, my hero," the shepherds said,
"Thou art dead and the battle o'er,
Thy country joyful and free."
And the soldier spake from the deep, dark grave:
"I am content."

And the lovers laughing pass,
And the soldier spake again:
"Are those the voices of them that love,
That love and remember me?"
"Not so, my hero," the lovers said,
"We are those that remember not,
For the spring has come and the earth has smiled
And the dead must be forgot."
And the soldier spake from the deep, dark grave:
"I am content."

When the last word was said there was perfect silence for a time. Then Mr. Daggart bustled about.

"Come, come, come! It is time to be going home. Helen, child; mother, where is O'Brien?"

"I'm here, sir," said O'Brien, from some place near by, and his voice was husky and unnatural. I joined the old gentleman and O'Brien on their walk to our tumble-down stable, and helped them about the horses. When we drove up for Helen and Mrs. Daggart they were standing beside Appleton. He helped them into the carriage, and our visitors drove away. There were calls of good-bye and good-night back and forth, but I did not hear Helen's voice.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAREWELL TO THE PRAIRIE.

It was a sunny afternoon in the lingering summer. Coming from the city, tired and out of tune with the world, I found our retreat again honored by visitors no less distinguished than Helen and her mother. The ladies were sitting upon camp chairs placed upon a rug which Appleton had spread for them on the rich short grass, and Appleton was standing erect and flushed of face before them. As I approached the group I noticed tears upon the face of the mother, but the daughter was calm and apparently unmoved. Closer inspection showed her face pale and her eyes almost tragic in the story they told of sleepless vigils and unshed tears.

Appleton turned slightly toward me as he heard my footsteps, but continued speaking to the women, merely beckoning me toward him with his left hand.

Wondering, I stopped and listened.

"I am going and nothing can stop me," Ap-

pleton was saying; "I stake my all, my life and my fortunes on this hour. Nothing can tempt me at this time to lose the privilege of giving what little I have to my country. This is our last day in this vapid place of inaction. You have given me your ultimatum," turning to Helen, "and now I give you mine. Go I will. Part we must. If I must go under your displeasure, leave you in anger, still I must go. No promise of ease or happiness can change my resolution!"

"Appleton! Appleton!" I called, for he seemed altogether unlike himself, so full of passion and fervor was this usually calm unemotional fellow. He turned again to me, and said, "It is nothing. Go in, I will join you soon. We should be ready to leave at five o'clock to-morrow morning, as you know."

I left them, and resumed my work, packing for the journey. A half hour later Appleton joined me at the work of the moment, quiet and cool as usual. He gave me a few words of explanation and then we addressed ourselves solely to our task of getting ready for the morning.

Helen and her mother had walked over from the railway station and surprised Appleton as

he worked. The approach of the crisis in his affairs, his dangerous plans and almost certain death had broken down completely the girl who loved him, and her distress had, in turn, won over to her side her parents. Backed by the old gentleman's instructions the two women had come out to our quarters to beg Appleton to give up his plans, remain at home, marry his sweetheart, and go into some sort of a money-making scheme held out by Mr. Daggart. There had been much halting and turning, and no end of talking and crying before Appleton understood the drift of things; the women wanted to take him home to dinner with them, when the pater was to clinch things, probably, in his own down-right way. Above all the appeal had been made to Appleton, one often pressed before—that he should change his venturesome, hazardous ways, once for all, and "be practical."

Appleton, as soon as he could get his breath, had essayed to show his fair visitors his view of things. It was a long talk, ending as I have reported. And Helen had gone away pale and angry, and had said that now she was sure Appleton cared no more for her

than for the grass under his feet—and those were her last words.

"And that is the end," said Appleton, "never speak of her again. We will fly freely now; no matter whether we come back or not!"

"I have certain feelings of my own, however," I declared, "I am not at all indifferent about coming back again, old man."

But Appleton would not even smile.

We tugged at our packing, forgetting to eat until our man of all work called us to our late supper.

That evening as we sat smoking our pipes and looking at the moonrise, the sounds of the summer night in our ears, we heard the muffled roll of a carriage on the soft prairie road. The faint light showed a wagonette driven rapidly toward us and it did not take close examination for us to recognize its occupants. Mr. Daggart was the driver of the pair of bays and by his side sat Helen.

The old boy was completely subjugated; and he was a man, too. He jumped down from his high seat as I took the horses' heads. He grasped Appleton's hand.

"You are all right," he said, "Helen shall

wait for you! Go and do your work like a man, and you shall not lack for friends to hail your success if it comes, or make up for failure if you must fail."

And down came Helen, too, clinging at first to her father, but he joined me, and we strolled away together, the horses cropping at the grass beside us, and so we left the lovers to say what was in their hearts.

After a while we all said good-bye for the twentieth time, and Appleton and I, even after all that, got into the wagonette and rode as far as the beginning of the boulevard with Helen and her father. Then at last we said good-bye in earnest, and walked in perfect silence back to our dismantled quarters.

I suppose an inventor ranks with a great general. We make much fuss over a great soldier or a great commander of seamen. I imagine all the agony of thought and doubt and contemplation that goes on within the minds of these as within that of an inventor, doubting whether he will be thought a success or a fool. In war the dreaming boy from the country becomes the Grant or the Dewey. In peace times the dreaming boy becomes the

Edison or the Tesla, the imported youth the same as the home-born youth, and so we all work together.

On the morning when the serious work of dismantling and preparing the Wild Goose for shipment was to begin, we had looked for the Swansons, to whom we had sent word a day or two before that they should be on hand and ready to help us. When we came out before daybreak, there, standing in a row by the great shed in which the Wild Goose rested, were three figures, an old man, once gigantic of stature, but now bent and worn, although still exhibiting signs of sturdy strength, a brown, withered old woman, and a straight young one of powerful frame and erect, fearless mien. We stopped, surprised, as our eyes took in the little group. It consisted of old Swanson, his wife and Leda.

"Where are the boys?" asked Appleton, looking at the old man's impassive face.

"'Listed," replied the ancient Swede, without a movement or gesture of face or figure. The old woman, without word or sound, put her blue apron to her eyes.

"Frederickson has 'listed, too," announced

Leda, looking triumphantly at O'Brien, who had evidently heard the news before.

"They have all gone; they are drilling this morning, and go soon for the war. We can help you. We will."

So spoke the vigorous Leda, and with such other assistance as we could muster we were fain to be content. All day we tugged and strained over our task and well into the night, until Appleton cried "Hold! enough!" Then the silent, obedient workers went away, after receiving and thanking us for their well-earned wages.

I remember the remnant of that Swedish family well, as last I saw it on the morning after our farewell to Helen and her father. The three stood close to the railway track looking after us as we were hurried away on our platform car, a part of a long freight train. There was no sign of regret or of any other emotion on the faces of the two old people. Their faded blue eyes looked up at us, followed us, their brown hands and arms were waved at us after their angular fashion and that was all. Leda, the Amazon, showed a subdued but unmistakable warlike excitement. Her eyes

shone, her cheeks blazed with color, her whole person seemed agitated with strong feeling. She, too, waved her hand, with a free and really noble gesture.

We swung our hats over our heads, the sun showed one red streak above the red horizon, and we were off.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WILD GOOSE FLIES EAST.

Our departure was not imposing for two such confident Americans in the very flood-tide of healthfulness and, what might be called, fightfulness of life. We have, I am glad to say, since been counted as of some value to our country and the world, but we were not considered at our true value at this particular time. There was trouble and it made us hard-up, and dipped into our reserve for emergencies. We had to take the Wild Goose from the big old barn-like structure I had learned to love, to the railway station a mile and a half away. When we got there—but it is needless to tell the story of the carrying of the long thing upon joined farmers' wagons, of the break-downs, and the difficulties, merely of mud and logs and little up-hill grades, and it is needless also to tell how Appleton "fell down," that is, how he swore as George Washington is said to have sworn at the battle of Monmouth. Only this I have to say that a

We had rows with the trainmen and conducted ourselves like commonplace, anxious American citizens trying to get valuable freight from one point to another point in good condition. We got it there, too, and one Leander O'Brien and one Sergeant Snedeker of the United States Marine Corps were the really effective forces. It was they who, when we stopped anywhere, leaped from the cars to the platform and ran ahead and had certain conversations at each station with the trainmen and railway agents, loud conversations, the echoes of which came back from the trees growing upon the adjacent hill-sides, such conversations inevitably resulting in the doing by the trainmen of whatever O'Brien and his firm friend, Snedeker, demanded.

A freight train—even a "fast freight"—is by no means comparable to lightning in its speed. We were five days on the road to New York where we were to board the Alaska, one of the new fleet of United States war-ships which was under orders to sail into troubled seas as soon as we were safely stowed with our precious Wild Goose under her protection.

It was worth while to look from the elevated perch on the "caboose" at the end of our

train, and see what was going on in the quiet country or restless towns and cities all along our way. In the level wooded lands of Indiana, the more richly diversified country of Ohio, the mountain ranges of Pennsylvania, and the placid beauty of New York, the climax of scenic loveliness being reached when we came down the Hudson River, through all the changes of plain, mountain and valley, rivers, forests and lakes, ran the vivid and visible spirit of war. In many a lonely mountain glen or level meadow where the railway had built its side-tracks, we saw crowds of blue-coated soldiers, lounging on the grass at midday, or leaping and playing at all sorts of athletic games while they waited for the signal for them to resume their journey again toward the war camps which were springing up in the East and South, camps of preparation and drill, where green boys were to be converted into soldiers. They were a buoyant lot, too. When our train hurried by one of these waiting regiments there were always scores of laughing fellows to swing their hats in the air and wave them at us.

"Food for powder!" I would mutter. "And what food! The fresh unspoiled manhood of

man with an engineer's training—I don't know why it's so, but it is so—can, it seems to me, swear better than any other man upon the face of the earth. Appleton, this man who had thought out great things, the man who was genuinely and delicately and earnestly, and in all thoughtfulness in love with a woman who deserved him and whom he deserved, who was what we call a fine and proper fellow, swore on that morning in a manner there's no use talking about. There was a Grecian named "Homer" who did things very well in his way, but in grandeur he couldn't compare with Appleton.

Among us, and because of us, and between us, we got ourselves and our charge upon the cars, on a freight train sent by an unappreciative or only partly appreciative government, in charge merely of a sergeant of marines and two men who were to take care of us in a general way, who knew that there were greater people than we, who were possessed of an insatiable thirst and appetite, and whom we satisfied and captured in no time. All this was simple.

The trip from Chicago to the Atlantic Coast is beautiful, to the ordinary traveler, but it is,

in a measure, less beautiful to thoughtful adventurers in charge of an air-machine laid upon two freight cars and liable to have its interior suddenly made wrong by the wrench which must inevitably come when those two freight cars, upon which the long machine lies, turn a sudden iron-laid corner at too great a speed. We had our troubles but we reached the coast in excellent condition. Appleton left us after the first day, to run ahead on a passenger express train. He was to get things ready for the transfer of the Wild Goose from the railway yards to the United States ship at her dock in New York.

I followed with Leander O'Brien and the sergeant and his men, all of us in a condition equally hopeful and apprehensive and, in a measure, patriotically daring. In the conclusion of the last sentence I speak for myself and not for others. I had a qualm now and then and almost wished I were out of the whole affair more than once.

The skies were bright and the trip was delightful as we went from Chicago to the coast and watched vigilantly over the Wild Goose to see that it was not wrenched sufficiently to affect it as it was switched around the curves.

a nation!" Sometimes when O'Brien, who was forever by me, caught the import of my mutterings, he would give me a quizzical look and say, "Well, and why not? I'm thinkin' it's as good to be food for powder as food for fishes, I don' know!"

O'Brien had serious objections to going up in the air machine over the water. He was willing to risk it above the good solid ground, but when it came to planning for experiments at sea the good fellow, although he would not own it, was shaken. He quoted to his friend Snedeker, the old story of the man who said that he preferred any land accident to one at sea. "If your railway train runs off the track, and you are thrown out, there you are! But if your ship is struck and you are spilled out where are you?"

But Sergeant Snedeker of the United States Marines scoffed at O'Brien's fears, and told him the best place to live or die was on salt water. His words may have had more or less effect, but not even the terrors of the salt sea could really keep O'Brien from following our fortunes to their end, no matter what that end might be. He was loyal even to his tongue, and maintained the honor of the navy gallantly

always, when once our journey was ended, and we were through being jerked and "snaked" along after a hooting, puffing, soft-coal-burning railway engine.

The honest fellow had been well tried, and I knew that there was no back-down in him, notwithstanding his brag and bluster. He had a steady head, and a cool set of hardy nerves. High in the clouds he could stand on our frail foot space, and look down calmly, taking note minutely of whatever was passing below. Furthermore, he could walk about and climb like a cat, and hang over a rope netting or wire guard in such apparent peril as took away the breath of the looker-on, but in no way affected the respiration of O'Brien himself. I had no fears for him if there should come the time when far under him at his post in the air-machine the ocean heaved in place of the solid ground. When the hour for action comes fear has no place in the make-up of such fellows as Leander O'Brien.

Appleton met us in the freight yard at the end of our journey. He was ready to transfer the Wild Goose to the Alaska, and with such help as he had secured, the task was not a hard one.

We were met courteously by the commander of the United States ship, introduced to his officers, and assigned our quarters, O'Brien having his place in some part of the ship allotted to men of about his standing in naval circles, whatever it may be. Before dark on the day of our arrival on board ship, the Alaska put to sea with sealed orders. The next morning we were well out of sight of land but in the midst of a great fleet of warships we had joined in the night.

Appleton and I were fairly fascinated by the near presence of a vast section of the navy. We were never tired of watching from our decks the iron-clad, turreted monsters, and of discussing their various death-dealing contrivances. The great ships kept well away from each other, but there was always one within plain reach of our glasses, often more, and they were ever subjects of our study and admiration.

As for us, we were treated by the naval officers of our ship and of the squadron with patient, respectful politeness in which we could not but discover a slight but keen edge of toleration and even amusement.

O'Brien in his quarters below caused the

sailors amusement without toleration even, to say nothing of politeness. Loud and angry were his expressions against the "sea chumps" as he miscalled the critics. Eventually a series of desperate conflicts lightened his existence and that of his companions of the "foke'sl," and then began O'Brien's conquests. He soon had a half a dozen steadfast friends, men he had soundly thrashed in fair fight, and from this time on his life on board the Alaska was one long holiday, broken only by temporary soreness of spirit when the Wild Goose was slightingly spoken of, but always his bruised feelings could be immediately salved by bruising the flesh and bones of his tormentors, and so he enjoyed his holiday with a light heart and with practically no interruptions.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON BOARD THE ALASKA.

Nothing could have been more radical than the change from our camping outfit on the Illinois prairie to the plunge we now made into the great world struggle. Our work and experiments had been so quietly conducted, and were of such a practical nature, even commonplace except for the constant presence of grave danger, that, in retrospect, the time during our summer of preparation seems to me, at least, like some unmatched piece out of a life which has in every other phase been full of stir and stress.

When we were once at sea with the war fleet, the prospect of action looming large directly on the morrow, the time at hand when our venture must be made for good or ill, Appleton seemed to awake as from a troubled and anxious dream. His preoccupation and abstraction fell from him like wornout garments. There was in him no trace of excited hopefulness or nervous dread over the trial

just before him. Instead of the care and anxiety which might have been expected to overwhelm him, there was absolute freedom from anything of the kind. He was as careless and joyous as a boy, in higher spirits and with more complete abandon to the hour than had ever seen him in before, or since. Every cloud was gone from his face, even the slight stoop in his shoulders vanished; his spare frame gained in flesh, and his limbs in muscle, during our voyage.

It was delightful to see the inventor's spirit and body flourish in the forcing atmosphere of certainty of action, after long continued and even agonizing experiment, argument and anticipation. It was the old story over again of the youth singing as he goes to battle.

Following loyally Appleton's example, after the first onslaught of seasickness was over, be it remarked, Leander O'Brien, under the circumstances already described, also exhibited new and cheerful phases of character. He had reached an undreamed of height of glory and delight. His fighting blood was humming all the time under the stimulus of his war-like surroundings. His pride in the Wild Goose was unbounded. Nothing could dim his con-

fidence in the ultimate success of Appleton and his invention, and before the end of our voyage he had made many converts to his opinions among the warm hearted tars of the Alaska.

Upon the warship the Wild Goose had been, it seemed to me, almost a trifle grudgingly given that place upon the huge deck whence it could most easily depart when its time should come for making an ascent. I know very little about the lashings of the machine, or about the way they adjusted it, but, though they might look more or less contemptuously upon it, I know that the machine was as well placed as could be devised by the officers in charge, with a due regard to the quick releasing of a thing which might, within the range of possibility, be of some possible good in a possible emergency. To the end of our stay upon the warship we constantly received courteous treatment from the officers, and our suggestions were received politely. As to the first adjustment upon deck of the queer device which might become suddenly an uplifting thing, our advice was asked, and then generally ignored, but after much fussing and stanchioning and binding and bracing the

Wild Goose seemed to be reasonably secure.

Appleton and I, as having a certain governmental dignity, messed with the officers of the Alaska and were treated by them with all comradeship and good feeling, though they laughed at us aside, we were sure. Captain Hillis, a man of many parts, an accomplished and experienced officer of the navy, and one who would not have neglected any duty he thought due his country even in the way of caring for a thing he did not believe in, but which had been forced upon him by his superiors, treated us as social equals though we felt that in his estimation he had been burdened with some extra freightage and two cranks and their helper. Nevertheless, at table, and at all times, he endured us patiently, and made us comfortable in a manly way.

Of course it was impossible that two men situated as we were, though hitherto civilians, could be daily at table with these American naval officers without certain allusions to our strange enterprise. There were often buoyant remarks from the younger officers regarding the nature of our mission, and it was inevitable that I should chaff back again or that Appleton should become fiercely earnest and en-

thusiastic. The elder officers never committed themselves, though they had something to say in our larkings and debates. Among the younger ones, though, we gradually found some stanch admirers and one or two who had great belief in us. One of these was a lieutenant named Goodman, a descendant, perhaps, of the famous captain named in the saucy national song, and another, also a lieutenant, though a junior one, named Garrity, who could make good jokes and Irish bulls and was altogether a delicious fellow. And so we sailed southeastward toward summer seas.

One day while Appleton, O'Brien and I were fumbling over the Wild Goose, as was our custom almost daily,—there was always something that needed, or we thought needed, looking to—I suddenly remembered O'Brien's dog, and asked what had become of Fitz. I had not even seen him during the last day or two before we left the prairie.

Appleton looked up inquiringly, at my question. He, also, had evidently forgotten poor Fitz so entirely as not even to miss his somewhat oppressive presence.

O'Brien, as we looked at him after an apparently innocent query, showed signs of em-

barrassment, which in him were so rare as to be astonishing if not alarming. His face became a deeper red than the permanent hue the sun and the sea winds had already painted there. He almost turned his back on us and tied and untied, uneasily, a bit of rope he had in his hands.

"Why, O'Brien," said Appleton, "you haven't smuggled your dog aboard, have you?"

Neither of us could help laughing at such a freak, but from O'Brien's demeanor we had both jumped to the conclusion that, rather than part with Fitz, his master had brought him along in defiance of fate.

"Naw, sir," O'Brien spoke up quite readily now, "Fitz is back west all right. He ain't no sea-going dog."

"Where,—what did you do with him?"

O'Brien gave his trousers a hitch, a trick he had learned of the sailors, and approached me. Lowering his voice so that Appleton could not hear, he said in my ear:

"I made a present of Fitz to Miss Daggart. A fine young lady she is, and she promised to take the best of care of the dog, and give him back to me if I should ever want him, al-

though, once giving him as a present, never would I think of asking him back, good fighter as he is! I ain't no 'Injun giver. See?"

"How in the world did you get Fitz to Miss Daggart?" said I, aloud, so that Appleton could hear.

"I tuck him to her house," O'Brien declared, and then, with a deprecating look at Appleton, he muttered that he had left something indispensable to his immediate duties below, and disappeared.

When our laugh was over, for the picture conjured up in our minds of Helen in her serene and perfect beauty, with Fitz, the epitome of all ugliness, as her charge and pet, convulsed us, we sent for O'Brien. Now that his secret was out he told us readily enough how he had taken Fitz to Helen on the day of his last visit to Chicago before we left, and how Helen had accepted his gift most graciously and appreciatively, and how she had comforted his honest heart by assuring him that she would see personally to the comfort and well-being of the dog.

"But after all," concluded O'Brien, a shadow crossing his glowing face, "It'll be a

bit dull for poor Fitz. There's little chance for a fight at Daggart's!"

"Well, he'll soon be out of condition, anyway," I assured the worried owner of this bulldog doomed to a life of inactivity. "He'll be fat and lazy and you wouldn't want him to fight anyway, now that he belongs to Miss Daggart."

"Sure!" assented O'Brien, brightening up again.

On another day Appleton, Lieutenant Garrity and I were sitting after dinner smoking listlessly and enjoying the effect of moonlight upon the long white limb of the inverted V of foam which stretched out on either side as the ship rushed through the water. Appleton and I chatted concerning something inconsequential, but Garrity had lapsed into a brown study. Suddenly he broke out:

"It's a droll thing, anyway."

"What's a droll thing?" I asked.

"Why, my being here at all."

"What do you mean?"

"Why man, it's plain as a pikestaff, it's Irish all the way through—my course, I mean. Here I am, an Irishman, as there are thousands of other Irishmen in this fleet, going

blithesomely into a fray with the express object of knocking into smithereens the opponents of the Anglo-Saxon race. Eh! but we're a queer lot, we Irishmen. We've been too fond of fightin' and other 'divarshin' since centuries before Brian Boru's great-great-great-grandmother was a baby. We've won thousands of victories, but got credit for mighty few of them save when we were fighting among ourselves, and now we're tumbling in shoulder to shoulder with the hated Sassenach, as usual. It's national suicide we're committing, nothing short of it." And he heaved a sigh, at the same time giving me a deprecating, and most comical look, aside.

"Nonsense," said Appleton. "It isn't a struggle between the Anglo-Saxon and the rest of the world, the Anglo-Saxons are Teutons, anyhow, and if I'm not mistaken, we'll presently be getting hard Teutonic thumps. If it were a clean division, as it seems to be just now, it would be unwise, racially considered, as between the English speaking and other races; but it isn't even that, for those blessed Japs are going to give an account of themselves on our side, and we haven't a thing in the world against the Shah of Persia and a

lot of others. Why, man, I don't believe there's a pure blooded Celt or Saxon in all our force. We're so mixed and intermingled, you Irishmen are so deft at love-making, and the rest of us travel so far, that there's no telling any more what's what. It would be better, perhaps, if we were all of one religion. Of course, that's what has made most of the trouble. In my opinion either Henry VIII. should have remained a good Catholic or have licked you more thoroughly into his way of thinking, but religions don't cut the figure they did once in the affairs of nations. Just be content. What more could an Irishman want than a fight, and, my boy, you'll get it. However," he concluded, reflectively, "this will be the last great war; there are reasons for saying it." And he smoked away silently.

"Of course you are thinking of your wobbly old sky-scraper," said Garrity. "Well, I don't want to cast a shadow over you, but when a man falls a mile and hits the water he's flat, and the fishes bite into him and eat him from the side as they would a pie!"

And so we, Celt and Saxon, chaffed and imagined things together. We talked, Appleton and I, of our boyish midnight exploits

in the country, and Garrity told of the queer things above the bogs and of the Banshee which screams when death is to come in Irish castles or anywhere in particular where Banshees may roam. And then we leaned back indolently and smoked and said nothing and looked southward, where the outlook from our side of the ship blended, despite the moonlight, into darkness.

A thin fog came up and the lights of other ships were barely visible. All at once, away off to the right loomed up something white and ghostly. It seemed rushing by in a direction opposite our own, though this effect was produced chiefly by the speed of our own great craft. It was but a sailing vessel, one of the few vagrants still left upon the ocean. We all knew what it was, but the effect remained. It recalled to my mind the old legend of the sea and I mumbled out something about the Flying Dutchman.

"I wish it were, by Jove I do!" said Garrity. "It would do one's eyes good to have a sight of it. I have a sympathy for her. Poor old thing; she's going to be mighty lonesome in the future. There may be pirates again, there may be tragedies galore on shipboard

and, for aught I know, there may be another ship destined to everlasting wanderings; but the Flying Dutchman and she wouldn't recognize each other as ships, were they to meet. Imagine one of these iron steamships turned into a Flying Dutchman! You'd hear reports from time to time from seafaring men who, in latitude this and longitude that, saw a mysterious old whaleback with a rusty turret on, wallowing about and trying ineffectually to sink, not a man visible, of course. No spectral sails and no long-bearded men you can see through on the deck below, nothing but an old tub awash! There's no romance, no mystery, nothing to raise the hair on a man's head in the idea! You might as well try to make a Flying Dutchman out of a warehouse!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ARMAGEDDON.

It was a morning of dazzling sunshine when we met the British fleet off the "blue Canaries," those islands known to most English speaking people mainly through an old song. It is a blue world down there; the water and the sky are blue as nowhere else in the Atlantic, it seems to me, and the islands rise misty and dreamy in another shade of blue from the ocean's bosom.

All the world knows of that meeting of the allied fleets on that sunny morning. The day is already the chosen theme of poets and painters, and has been described by a thousand pens with varying degrees of enthusiasm and truth.

No man ever saw a more impressive sight. I can remember every detail of it as it looked to me, but I am glad it does not remain to me to describe it. I stood silently by Appleton when we came in close view with our glasses of the iron monsters of the British navy. As the grim line of battle-ships gave forth their

din of salute to our flag-ship my heart jumped into my throat, and tears found an unaccustomed place in my eyes. It was beautiful, but with the beauty of terror, that assembly of naked metal fighting machines lying there on the strongly heaving yet unbroken sea of blue water. How our men cheered as we swept into that remote companionship which naval custom prescribes for ships, and what deep, loud cheering came across the water from our kinsmen after the roaring cannons were still and the flag dipping was over.

Then there was a great wig-wagging of signals, and trim boats with jaunty crews clad in snow-white went dancing about, carrying the commanders to our Admiral's ship and him to the British Admiral, who stood awaiting his visitors on the deck of his own great battle-ship.

I stood still on the Alaska's deck in a sort of trance, so great and bewildering was the moment of time in which I was living, and I remember little more of that day or night, so profound was the impression of that meeting of giants on the heaving ocean.

Then that other storied morning when our allied fleets met the enemy, came in few days

or many; it mattered not to us, so busy were we, and so hot over the coming fight. We steered straight for Gibraltar, and the Latins came out to meet us, as all the world knows, and offered us battle before the German Admiral with his ships had joined them. We were prepared. We had been awake all night, and so had every soul in our allied squadrons, and before the first streak of dawn, every man was at his post on his ship ready for action.

Appleton was anxious about one thing only, and that was, which way the wind was blowing. It meant everything to him, and to me; nothing to anyone else around us.

There was no confusion nor disorder. Everything was so perfectly arranged for the coming fight that the officers and men near us were idly curious over our getting away; so free were their minds from cares of detail, and their gallant hearts from any question as to the outcome of the tremendous struggle in which they were soon to be engaged. By the growing light we worked, and I will admit that I was one of the most frightened men in the world when we began preparations for lifting our miserable little air-machine from the deck of the Alaska. There was nothing in

the surroundings to encourage a fellow. Even the sailors grinned at us, though there may have been a trace of pity in the expression of some of their countenances because, of course, they thought we would be drowned. But I was the only funking man; as for Appleton, he was so earnest and active and unthinking of anything but success, that he was irritating to me. O'Brien was, as always, brimming over with confidence. He replied briskly to the chaffing, and was happy. He had not yet learned that he was not to be taken with us on the trip. Despite my own alarm, I found occasion to get mad and wanted to throw at Appleton one of the thole-pins which lay so easy to my hand. I was quivering with anger and impatience all the time I was aiding him and disentangling and getting ready to float aloft our preposterous old silvery-brown cigar of a thing, just a piece of impertinence to be plumped up into the sky and intended, with all arrogance, to set a new pace for the war-prancing of the world, and to suggest new premises and new ideas for the statesmen of the world.

All the time Garrity danced about us and did intelligently at least more work than I in

the releasing of the air-machine and probably as much as did Appleton. I think I fell more in love with that wild Irishman on that particular occasion than at any previous period of our acquaintance. There was something so astonishing in his activity in the cause with which he disagreed, and something so lovable in his desire for immediate fight, that I regretted from the bottom of my heart that he was not to rise aloft with us. We had, finally, the assistance of the sailors, and at last the Wild Goose began to put on airs. It lifted itself from its ignoble place upon the deck and exhibited anxiety to go somewhere. Some of the officers of the vessel stood about us, and the comments they made, even then, were scandalous. Being friends, we chaffed at each other in a way which could not otherwise have been endured. Being men about to take our lives in our hands, we talked lightly of what was about to happen. Those blazing good fellows in bedecked uniforms laughed in my face when I told them, jauntily and laughingly, that we were probably all that could save them, although my heart was not a great way from my mouth when I was doing all this boasting. As for them, they simply counted

Appleton and me as dead men. We were already instinctively relegated to the list of those who must disappear in the action about to follow.

Meanwhile Appleton was puttering around and looking after details. Even at this late day I question the course of that gentleman at that particular juncture. He should have risen a little more to the heroic aspect of the occasion. He didn't rise at all. He simply trotted around with some small tool in his hand, looking after the little things we were to have with us and giving directions to O'Brien and the other fellows in a low and pleasant voice.

When all was arranged for cutting loose, the officers of the big warship gathered about us, and I will say for them that then, at that last moment, they showed a little feeling, for there was a strong grip in the hand shakes I got. They thought us lunatics, but they knew that so far as the United States of America was concerned, our hearts were in the right place and that, even though we failed, we were brothers in arms and meant all right. It was all good, but, by Jove! the airs I've put on over those officers when I've met

them since! They didn't know the kind of people they were taking leave of! They were merely good hearted, plucky and half-sorrowful fellows seeing us, as they thought, depart to death.

Poor O'Brien! At the last day Appleton had decided against his going with us, and he was disconsolate. The risk was too great, and then the weight of one more person counted in our frail fighting machine.

And then, just then, as if to spoil our moment of farewell, O'Brien, the faithful, who had been working inside the carrier, on the machinery, discovered some defect in one of the automatic air-pumps. Appleton sprang impatiently into the carrier, and began furiously examining as to the trouble. An hour's delay might mean everlasting failure. Then there came a signal, and in a moment we were forgotten, we three forlorn land-lubbers, by everyone on that ship.

The advance ships of the enemy were in sight.

We fumed and fretted, unheard and unnoted, and neither knew nor cared what was going on around us. Our ship, we realized, was under increased speed, and after a while

we heard the deep roar of distant guns, Japanese, as we learned later. O'Brien, who was at Appleton's side, just lifted his head and said:

"It's begun!"

Now the little break in machinery had been repaired, although not to O'Brien's satisfaction. He begged to be taken with us.

"Youse'll need me, Mr. Appleton; won't you, Mr. Wentworth?" he said earnestly. "Let me go."

But Appleton had decided once for all. Something in the look he gave O'Brien made me understand why he ordered him to remain. It made me quake a little for a moment, but Appleton called to me to take my place in the carrier of the machine, and the quaking was over.

Just as we got under way the Alaska, which had wheeled into her place in the line of action, let go one of her great guns, and as if impelled by its shock and roar, we rose swiftly into the air. We were still practically unnoticed and unconsidered, though people ordinarily watch the rising of a balloon or anything like it, and we attracted no attention

from the other ships. Those aboard had too much on their minds to devote any attention to the experiment of a couple of presumable fools. They had a fight on hand, the result of which would be to test the soundness of all theories connected with the fighting of men in iron ships. Our experiment might do to talk about afterward. Neither friend nor foe thought of us at all. We gave much thought, however, to the enemy. A shot from them would have been an unwelcome visitor to us just as we left the ship, and we could not help knowing that at first we were a fair mark. We rose quickly, once started, and then wavered and hung above the Alaska, not yet out of range, and for the moment far from safe.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPLETON BECOMES "PRACTICAL."

It is not injustice to say of the Wild Goose that immediately after her swift departure from the warship, though she carried two Cæsars and their fortunes, she behaved in a most unpatriotic, not to say uncertain, manner. Something did not work well—I don't remember now just what it was—but it did not work, and the question was imminent for a second or two as to whether we should "seek the ether," a proceeding which we had often alluded to in our conversations, or suddenly drop flatly or sideways, or any other way, into what I had been accustomed to describe in talks of anticipation with Appleton, as "a watery grave." Appleton had hitherto replied to such allusions irrelevantly, though in a loud and resonant voice. Now we both thought a good deal, but said nothing about the ether or the water. The machinery yielded to Appleton's coaxing at last, after a fashion, and just in time, and then the Wild Goose seemed

rather to seek the companionship of the light clouds that were hovering far above, than of the sharks whose fins were cutting the water below. Once under way we arose steadily, surely and safely, and with all the propellers driving furiously at command. We checked our course, I judged, about a mile above the ocean. Then came the problem, the first great test, as to how practically dirigible we were under such conditions. We had an amazing amount of doubt about ourselves, and our feelings of uncertainty were subsequently justified, but, fortunately for civilization, not at that moment. We rose after dipping once or twice, and somehow floundered—though floundered doesn't seem a good word in describing the way of getting along in the upper depths—on to the eastward, then steered to reach a position over the enemy's ships, and faced what we had hoped not to find—a pushing upper wind from the east. Could we overcome it? We didn't know, and upon the issue of a little fight, away up in the sky, between liquified air, adapted to a use by the brain which God has given man, and the fierce air currents which God sends around the world, depended a great issue. It was clear it was

in one way air against air, but the fight was unequal. The vast ocean of air remained still barren of an idea. The air opposing it had been impregnated and turned into a force through the medium of man's intelligence.

Fluttering, pushing, almost at a standstill, far above the sea, hung the Wild Goose, a mile or two away from our own fleets upon the waters and seeking to attain just the position we wanted above the Slavs and Latins. It nosed and pushed and bustled, while we did all we could with all the forces at hand, but still the fierce wind from the east, fighting valorously against us as did the stars against Sisera, kept us high in the air between heaven and earth, hanging, to quote the hack simile, like Mahomet's coffin, though I hope that in Mahomet's coffin has never been used such language as was used by us—yet we kept fumbling along toward the place we sought.

It was wonderful, what lay beneath us, when we had dug our way against the upper wind to a standstill above the fighting fleets, for the battle was on. Very beautiful was the scene. There lay upon the water the two navies, one to the east, the other to the west, rushing toward each other and, so great are the carry-

ing powers of modern cannon, belching forth shots which wrought deadly mischief when the ships were yet miles apart. And all this under a summer sky, with the air blowing well, too well almost for us in its upper depths, and the sun shining brightly. Tossing and glittering beneath the radiance were the ships—but what use is there in talking about it? Overhead, far overhead, hung the Wild Goose, laden with explosives and trying to reach the center of operations. Upon the sea at one point the Slav and Latin watched angrily and fought bravely with no thought of surrender, unmindful still of two unknown and unsung individuals who were about to drop things from above. In one of Macaulay's poems he tells of the great Twin Brethren who assisted in some fight between the Romans and other Latins of the outlying provinces. Pshaw! They or any other twin brethren were but as thistledown compared with us up there in that throbbing machine, scared but hopeful.

Suddenly the east wind fell. Maybe a waterspout had sucked something down or lifted something up away off in the wide ocean of waters. Somehow the wind fell and the Wild Goose, slowly at first, crept into the face

of the current and eventually hung almost stationary over the opposing fleet. Then began the trouble between Appleton and me, trouble entirely personal and meaning nothing save the wrangling between two fellows who loved each other, and who were working with every force of mind and nervous energy together, life or death to ourselves being entirely out of mind.

It had been arranged that Appleton, knowing how to handle the air-machine—he was rather vain over it, I say it now again—rather vain—that Appleton should hold the machine above the object of attack and that I should be the aerial marksman whose business it would be to drop things accurately.

Now that we found ourselves hanging just where we wanted to be, namely, over one of the enemy's great warships, came the hurried debate, a debate as to the manner in which from a point a mile high in the air, a certain substance called dynamite should be dropped most accurately upon a ship floating on the water directly below.

For such fame and reputation as may come to a man who has devised the best way of dropping dynamite, and steering it straight

downward, I want, at this point, to put in an earnest claim. Appleton is all right in his way, of course; he invented this lifting thing, but it was I, I who am writing this story, who devised the gun which shot with no nonsense about trajectories, and the gun which always hits its mark unless there was some fault in the human aiming. While we had been arguing I had been aiming, and Appleton had been examining with his glass what lay directly beneath us on the water. He stopped all talking by quietly saying that our mark was the Russian flagship, the Russian Admiral being evidently in supreme command of the engagement then going on between the fleets of the world.

"The time has come," said Appleton.

The big gun of this warship of the sky was a simple thing. It was but a hole in the bottom of the carrier, a sort of a trap-door, three feet square, which turned back on hinges. And we had a sort of plummet arrangement invented, as already intimated, by me, in which I took great pride. It was only a slender rod of lead, with rear and fore sights upon it, and it located a point below to a nicety. We hung thus, far above the Czar, and

Appleton managed the craft, moving here and there as I called out to him. Then, finally, I got what seemed a reasonably good aim and dropped one of the great charges of explosive.

We watched the descent of the mass with all anxiety and there came to me, a little later, a sensation of astonishment and deep disgust commingled. For what I saw was this: The thing rushed downward until it disappeared from sight and then, close beside the Czar, rose a vast mountain of snow! I knew what had occurred. I had missed the ironclad, but the impact upon the water of the mass dropped from a height so great had been such that the dynamite had exploded as if hurled downward upon a field of iron. The mountain of snow was but the water of the Atlantic torn into a feathery mass and thrown into all directions. For a minute the Czar was invisible. Then the snow mountain disappeared and the ironclad was riding the ocean still; but tossing as if upon a tidal wave.

I was enraged. Something of what men have called the lust of battle seemed to come upon me. I must strike the Czar, and there were not too many packages of the dynamite

remaining! I was angry with Appleton, unreasonably.

"Why don't you steady her?" I roared. "Why don't you show that you can manage your own craft? You've nothing to brag about!"

Appleton—not blamable at all—was humiliated deeply. "I'll try to do better next time," he said, and I seized another package of dynamite, adjusted it, and prepared for another cast. The sight was taken again and the terrible thing dropped.

What happened then changed what will be the story of all wars of the future. Yet I can tell little of it. There was the mountain of snow again; that was all. But when it disappeared there was no Czar riding the waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

I was wild: "Drive her ahead!" I shouted. "Drive her over that big ship to the left!" and he did as I demanded. Again there was the steadying and aiming, again the discharge and a repetition of the awful tragedy below. I was mad as any Berseker. Appleton turned to me excitedly:

"What shall we do? Look out for our flagship and see what they are doing below there!"

We looked through our glasses and saw what made our hearts beat wildly and made us shout together. No longer came white puffs of smoke from any of the army of iron monsters. Instead there was a flutter of white flags to the east and a, to us, soundless concentration of the navies which we guessed meant not further battle, but surrender, surrender partly, it may be, because of the havoc wrought by the Anglo-American and Japanese fleets upon the enemy, but chiefly because of this dreadful creature of the skies. The battle upon the seas was ended. Our shot had thrown everything into confusion by demolishing the enemy's flagship, to say nothing of our second victim, and I looked across the narrow space into Appleton's face. Its expression was inscrutable. I inferred that he was as puzzled regarding my own look for he remarked, apropos of nothing: "What is the matter, old man?" and a moment later exclaimed: "We must get down."

We had accomplished our mission; we felt in our hearts that we were the only people of prominence existing, and the next thing was to get back to glory and the Alaska. We prepared to descend in one of those long

graceful sweeps, but when we started to descend the long graceful sweep somehow disappeared from the practical work of my friend Appleton, who, I still insist, is a good engineer. Something had given way again and this time seriously. I don't know what the matter was; I didn't know then, but it was plain that we were in desperate straits. I only know now that the thing of the air, the terrible Wild Goose, did not come down in any graceful sweep at all; I know that the men upon it felt themselves going suddenly to their doom and I mean a doom with a big D. There was a little power left somewhere among the parts of the machinery; some propellor was still whirling in a vague and kindly helping but weak way, and I, wondering what Appleton was thinking about, was painfully aware that we were slipping down the air bank into the Atlantic Ocean. Personally I felt, considering the slant we had, that the Wild Goose would, before it stopped, burrow its nose in among some mermaids with sea flowers in their hair, and then dive deeper and lie still in the mush of rotting galleons lost centuries ago. Something gave way again, and we slanted less and finally shot down into

the sea with a vigor which was wonderful. The details of this disaster are scant in my mind. I remember that an admirable thing devised and managed, up to a certain point, by two good Americans dived and that one Mr. Appleton and I leaped away as the thing pierced the ocean; and, our eccentricity and uncertainty having been observed from the Alaska and not only observed but construed correctly as to what it meant, that almost as soon as we had leaped and gone under and then come gasping to the surface a boat reached us and we were taken aboard and hurried to the warship. I remember that our clothes fitted us with too exceeding closeness and that, helpless and wet, with these clinging garments upon us, with our hair hanging lank and flat beside our faces, and with our two selves badly scared and out of breath and wondering what we had done, and the Wild Goose resting on the ocean's floor—I remember that as we came up, still dripping, from the boat to the deck, there wasn't any discipline upon the ship of war Alaska, that is, for the moment. I think the officers were even worse than the men. They came tumbling toward us in a lump and the language they used—

well, it was such as fellows use to other fellows who are thought to have done a good thing.

I was surprised at Appleton. We had lost the Wild Goose. We were half drowned, shattered in nerve, and did not, even now, know what had really happened on the waters about us, and yet that arrogant inventor put on as many airs, as he clambered over the rail and braced himself opposite me on the deck, as if he were the admiral of all the fleet. As for me, I will say that, imitating, as a good subordinate should, the manner of my superior, I assumed at once, though wet and cold and shaken, a proud and haughty air, somewhat marred by my inclination to laugh when I saw O'Brien among the throng pressing toward us and giving vent to the shrill whoop of South Halsted Street. However, we did very well, and Appleton certainly maintained the manner of one of those gentlemen to whom the Romans were accustomed to give a triumph, and who rode down the Roman streets with leaves about his head, and a lot of prisoners and plunder tailing after him.

I was taken to my cabin and got into clean clothes, as did Appleton, and later I met the

officers of the Alaska. I was affable, simply affable, that was all there was to it. I ought to have been kicked from one end of that battle-stained ship to the other because of my patronizing demeanor. Appleton was too earnest to be foolish, but the calm and lordly manner in which I talked with those officers, commenting upon the weather or whether they thought Smith's latest book better than that of Jones, or what they guessed would be the result of the coming election in the Fourteenth Congressional District of Iowa—the manner in which I did that I shall always think was fine. There wasn't an officer on board the Alaska who had not an earnest and wholesome desire to get me out somewhere and lick me, and there wasn't an officer on board the Alaska who wasn't justified in this impulse because of the quiet, but almost demigodly way I had assumed. I have been informed since, confidentially, by certain officers of the ship, that I escaped by only a hair's breadth, and I have been equally confidential in telling them that, even in my own opinion, the slaying would have been justifiable.

Meanwhile Appleton and the captain were conferring in the cabin, and there was much

signaling between the admirals of the fleets. An hour later a boat was lowered and Appleton and the captain of the Alaska went away to a conference of commanders on board the American flagship.

I thought of Helen Daggart, as I looked after Appleton. "He has become 'practical,'" I said, under my breath, addressing myself, for want of a better listener.

CHAPTER XIX.

AFTER THE BATTLE.

Before morning Appleton and I had learned, and taken to heart, what had happened on the water while we were hovering above the fighting fleets.

We missed some faces from among our naval comrades and associates. A shell had struck the Alaska, killing and wounding officers and men, and there was a great hole where the missile had torn its way through wood and iron. There were wounded men below and dead to be buried in the sea.

As we slowly regained a normal condition of mind, we realized that in our shaking, quivering sky machine we had simply given the last stroke to a series of blows by which the enemy had been disastrously and completely defeated and about reduced to unconditional surrender. When our shot dropped from above, sinking their flagship, their losses had already been appalling, and our second charge had sunk the finest Italian ship afloat.

The great guns and dynamite tubes of the Americans and English had already sunk many a gallant cruiser and battleship. Others had limped away to the rear of their lines, disabled or sinking. Thousands of lives had been yielded up there that day on both sides—brave men's lives, all. The Russian Admiral had been, as we had surmised, in supreme command, and our play in the game came just in time, not only sinking the flagship, but interfering with the rally of its forces. There must have been a panic among the French, Italians and Russians, Austrians and all in the great fleet. Anyway, they struck their flags and flew the emblem of submission, and so the end came, and the details, to the last item, all the world knows.

Our eyes opened wide as we heard for the first time the now oft repeated story of the fight. Especially were we delighted over the pluck of the Japanese. Their bold return of the fire of the enemy, when they were suddenly attacked on their way to meet us, tickled our whole fleet. Anyone else would have run away, but not the Japs. That they simply turned and fought until we came up with them

was something which endeared them at once and forever to the Anglo-American navy.

We were told, too, that there was good prospect for a struggle to come as nothing had been seen of the formidable German fleet, the one from which the most of a fight was expected, and the admiral of which, we had believed, would command the enemy. It is a matter of history now, how the German Admiral did not arrive in time, and how he was forestalled by the Russians and French, backed up by their allies. We were, of course, ignorant of the real situation but we expected battle with the Germans at once, and every effort was put forth by our forces to give the German Admiral a reception fitting such a distinguished and self-satisfied commander.

We had, now, a new impression of our combined navies, and the enemies' fleets. While we had been wavering up and slanting down, and struggling for our lives on the Wild Goose, we had caught views which remained, instantaneous pictures, imprinted on the mind forever. It was like a great city upon the water, stretching away for miles, that gigantic collection of ships. The English navy alone was so immense simply measured by the space

it covered, as to bewilder us. The American fleet showed strong and great when alone on the seas, and was an impressive sight, but beside the tremendous gathering of Great Britain's sea forces, it looked small. In mere numbers the Anglo-American fleet had been overpowering before the fight, and now, when so many of the enemies' ships had been added by conquest, the Armada was such as the world had never seen before, nor even dreamed of.

When darkness fell over the waters on the night after the battle the Alaska was one of this immense company of great iron sea monsters on which there was little rest. During the night, our wounded having been transferred to the hospital ship and our dead having been given a sailor's burial, we got under way and when morning broke our ship was one of a long line, far out on the seas, making a wide detour to assist in closing in on the Germans. We saw nothing of the actual operations by which the great German fleet was brought to terms. We were too far on the outer rim of the victorious lines. It was a foregone conclusion, however. Nothing could withstand the forces gathered under the

Anglo-American and Japanese banners there in the East Atlantic. We were so sure of the result that it was not even a matter of discussion, and no one was surprised when, early on the following morning, the German surrender was announced.

We imagined, even then, the rage of the German Emperor, over the jealous haste of his allies, and the balking of his plans. I have often thought since that it was all as if well planned for the ultimate unity and glory of our race. The Germans accepted the situation with commendable perspicacity and self-control. The event of that day taught a lasting lesson. Germany began to see where her true interest lay and where was her place in the affairs of mankind according to her ethical relations and her traditions. The first steps she took toward Anglo-Saxon solidarity were through the bitter ashes of defeat, but they led toward the paths of wisdom and the calm heights of peace at last.

It is strange how little one may know of great events when they are passing near, even under one's eyes. Much of what we saw on those last days in European waters we had to interpret by the light of future developments.

The days passed, and we led the lazy life of the homeward bound. A warship after a battle, especially after war discipline is relaxed, teems with talk and story and gossip as fairly as does a club. Everyone has something to tell and everyone has time to listen.

Our officers had many a confab of starry nights and on long, uneventful days, and Appleton was by far the most thoughtful man on board the Alaska. He bore his honors with manly modesty; was frank and open in explanations of his views as to the outcome of mechanical devices in war but never gave an inkling of the secret of the Wild Goose. That remains his own, shared alone with me, to this day.

We were often questioned concerning the details of the fight as we saw it. Of course no one ever before had such a chance for a birdseye view of a battle, and equally, of course, no one who had such a point of view could ever, under such circumstances, have seen anything definitely. We had seen something, though, and knew what we were talking about, and when we said that what we saw was groups of dark spots lying on the water beneath us, and told how like toy Noah's arks

the great ships looked when we were so far above the water, there was a general laugh of incredulity. It seemed too much to believe, just the plain truth.

One day when we were spinning yarns on deck Appleton asked junior lieutenant, Garrity: "What was that chase we saw the beginning of, toward the end of the fight the other day?"

"Yes," I chimed in, "I have thought of that a dozen times! What yacht was that skipping away, with a fast cruiser after it? No one seemed to pay any attention to the chase—we ourselves didn't, after the first moment. We had other matters to attend to."

"So did we," said Garrity, "but that yacht you saw running away was 'The Gauntlet' or the 'Gore-Gulper,' as some prefer to call the craft."

"Oh!" said Appleton, a great light breaking in on him, and "Oh!" said I, and we all laughed together.

The yacht Gauntlet had been chartered by a syndicate of two or three sensational newspapers of the class run shrewdly to skim the cream from the sea we call the masses, newspapers necessarily on the frothy and generally

wrong side, but with plenty of money and energy. The Gauntlet was well equipped. The "Commissioner," as they called the newspaper man in charge of the boat, and the group of reporters who accompanied him had done some exceedingly clever work in the literary world and was a right good fellow. Through the pages of his books and magazine stories he had posed somewhat as a man of blood and iron and his hat had become a trifle tight. He was most blood thirsty in his newspaper dispatches now, and so it came that throughout the fleet the name Gauntlet had been dropped and the yacht was generally alluded to as the "Gore-Gulper." She was certainly a fast yacht and whatever may have been the seamanlike or unseamanlike qualities of the popular writer, the hired captain and crew were sea-dogs equal to an emergency and the yacht was as staunch as she was fast. The commander-in-chief or "Commissioner" of the Gauntlet had looked upon the Wild Goose and upon Appleton and me with contempt from the beginning. The fact of our presence upon one of the warships had been barely mentioned, with some supercilious comment, in one of his dispatches, and it

may be that there is a shadow of prejudice in what I say. I think not, though.

Then Garrity told us the story of the beginning of the wild flight of the Gauntlet—a story, as has since appeared, without an ending. As Garrity went along with it we were able to supplement the tale, from our brief observations, at least so far as the beginning of the race was concerned.

Hovering about the fleet during the progress of the fight and keeping, with much discretion and good sense out of the varying lines of fire, the Gauntlet seemed to be getting most valuable information of the sort to enable a grand description of a grand sea fight. This was her enviable condition up to a certain time. Then suddenly out from the mass of warships to the far left darted a small cruiser which evidently regarded the Gauntlet as its particular prey. Of course it was infamous and a shame that a fast yacht carrying gentlemen of large brains, whose mission it was to tell such a story of a sea fight as had never been written on sea or land before, should be chased by a beastly warship with guns poking out threateningly. However, let it be said of the great representatives of unreliable

journalism that not for an instant did they lose their self-possession. The Gauntlet turned and fled, fled fast and far, and the fast cruiser followed. The name of this cruiser, a Spaniard, Garrity declared, was the Polo y Barnebe Dom el Santa Rosabelle.

Away they went, straight for the northeast, far, far from scenes of battle and disaster. From our vast height in the Wild Goose we could note them well. The Gauntlet fairly flew, but then so did the Santa Rosabelle and the distance between them seemed to neither increase nor decrease until they slipped from sight.

As a matter of fact, both vessels were picked up by a vagrant American cruiser a week later, the Rosabelle still in pursuit of the Gauntlet, while sloshing about in the Bay of Fundy; but this story is not accepted by a large proportion of the seafaring world.

As time passed, long after our voyage was ended, strange tales came filtering up from seaport towns of what had been seen by veracious sailor men in various portions of the seven seas. They all tended to one end; that somewhere there was dread flight and fierce pursuit by two modern craft of modern size.

From all kinds of reliable seamen of all nationalities the stories came and from various seas and ports. The crew of some sardine fishing boat of the Mediterranean would see passing them in the night, first a craft resembling the Gauntlet and next the one recognized as the Santa Rosabelle. Then the honest French fishermen would cross themselves and wonder what it meant, and tell the story in Lyons and Marseilles. Next some Norwegian captain would report that, off Iceland, just in the trail of the black water across which danced to first discovery of America Red Eric and his cockleshells, beneath the shadow over the sea from hills where the Norns sit knitting things—he had seen, slipping along, the Gauntlet with the Santa Rosabelle just out of range behind. Again some desperate adventurer, seeking the South Pole, would report that in latitude mighty near the end, and in longitude almost nothing, across a great open sea which he couldn't reach because his ship was locked in and his sledge dogs dead and his crew down with scurvy, he saw, through the frosty mist, what seemed to be a flight and a pursuit, and he described the vessels and what excellent

time they were making in the distant open water while the sea lions yelped.

Then from lazy latitudes, where the women don't wear much and the men wear less, where the beachcomber has a family of forty and makes his grandchildren do all the work, there would come, and still come, tales of this everlasting chase, with the Santa Rosabelle ever on the Gauntlet's water trail. Or, it may be, that some tramp steamer, skirting the Sargossa Sea in some trade adventure, reports that, away off among the weeds of the waveless ocean, its lookout discovered a pair of craft, one evidently in pursuit of the other, which cut through the mass of vegetation as though it were but skim milk, and so passed out of view.

I don't know what to think of the story myself. I'm becoming impressed. I'm getting inclined to have an interest in it and am making no absolute assertions. All I know about the chase is that I saw the start.

Other incidents as grotesque, among the many tragical, were told of the great sea fray, and there was much overflow of spirits among the conquerors homeward bound. So must have been ruggedly joyous the Greeks sailing

back from Salamis, the men of Drake turning reluctantly from the flanks of the storm-driven Armada, or those sailing homeward from Trafalgar. And, looking at the sun-browned sailors I thought of how they would "make Rome howl" as did the sailors fresh from Actium, only it would not be Rome literally where would occur the blithesome "howling" this time, but Liverpool and London, and New York and Chicago, and Tokio and Yokohoma and a thousand other cities, coast and inland. It was a buoyant company on every ship, but there was thought among the officers. Did they foresee the time when, possibly, their occupation would be gone?

CHAPTER XX.

THE ANGLO-SAXON UNION.

The world was in perplexity. The war had practically ended and the Anglo-Saxon was now dominating the world. All was hesitancy and apprehension and the greater minds of all the nations civilized were active to seize or save. But there came no grasping in the mediæval way; broader thoughts, Christian thoughts, greater comprehension in the mind of the human being, all tended toward the making of what was best. There was no startling new alignment of the boundaries between countries. The map-maker, in changing his maps, had only to put a dot here and there upon his islands of the seas and upon his continents—dots insignificant, but representing so many Gibraltars, and indicating the immediate coming government of the globe. This was done swiftly, though only after a hurriedly convened and, in one sense, forced Congress of the great powers.

Never were negotiations more pregnant for

the future; never came together statesmen more keen of edge and arrogant or hopeful, as the case might be; never before had the assembled politicians or the men of war who were representatives, faced a problem the equations of which were so indefinite. That the Anglo-American alliance would now be extended to become comprehensively Anglo-Saxon was understood by all, but under what conditions? There were other problems to be considered as well.

The Congress met in Amsterdam. Geneva was first suggested, as a matter of habit, but this was a gathering where salt sea winds should be felt and an atmosphere of intellectual freedom and practicality. There has been a flavor of freedom and practicality in the Low Countries since long before Alva learned how keen were Dutch blades and how deep Dutch water.

The deliberations of the Congress were earnest and long-continued. There were, speaking broadly, arrayed on one side Great Britain and her dependencies, the United States, Germany—allowed—Japan, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden and Denmark. In opposition and in comparatively submis-

sive opposition, were arrayed France and Spain and Portugal and Italy and Russia and Austria, and—at heart—most of the republics of South America. Racial and religious instincts had full sway in the convention. It is but justice to say that the lately successful in war were more than indulgent in the quality of demands made, much discussed and ultimately enforced in the convention.

The conquerors said, "We are the conquerors. Rightly or wrongly, we consider ourselves the approved of Providence in directing most of the affairs of the world, and we propose, for the present, to direct them. We do not intend to take your territory, but we do intend to establish our authority as paramount, and centuries may pass before you again acquire the position you lately held relatively, even if you develop a different growth. We believe that we are the people most adapted for the population of new lands and propose to act in accordance with this idea. We hold, for instance, that the development of Africa, the new continent, to be civilized is best in our hands, and we prefer that as it is gradually populated in its richer portions by the European overflow, that overflow shall not be

Latin. The French, Spanish and Portuguese occupancy of that continent must cease with the signing of this contract. We have fancies about the idea of a railroad which shall run from Alexandria to Cape Town. The administration of the long neglected continent has passed from your hands entirely as one of the results of the late encounter. This is understood between the Americans and Britons, and the details are left to Great Britain and her European colleagues in the Congress. As to other fields, America, with her millions and millions of unoccupied square miles, demands at this time no land which she has not already taken. She has territory enough, a roadway around the world, and offers a home and more to all of her kind who may come. No longer, though, will she allow the addition to her population of ignorant, helpless millions, hopelessly pauperized, alien in race, language and affiliations. There is room for the Hun and Latin steerage loads in South America, where there is a continent not yet half conquered from nature, and where the immigrants may become pioneers and men instead of parasites and dependents. The immigration laws of the United States will henceforth be distinctly par-

tial. There will be an exercise of the law of might, but, none the less, will it be one of self-preservation.

To the Russian representative, to the Slav, baffled again as has happened to him so often within the later centuries, a tone was adopted even more distinct: "You may be the coming force in the history of the world," it was said, "but your time has not yet come. We propose to hold the Bosphorus, propose to say what ships you may for the next ten years build in the Black Sea or at any of your lately gained Asiatic ports. You must wait."

There was protest, but it was vain, for what argument could be made by a group with no efficient navies behind it to a group controlling the warships of the world? There was little disappointment, though, for the terms were better than the defeated nations had reason to expect. They congratulated themselves that there was, at most, slight dismemberment of territory. What did the new possessions matter? Only the Russian chafed.

Germany was the nation which had most cause for satisfaction. Never before in history had racial recognition stood a people in such stead. There was little of the military swag-

ger about the German representative who came to take what he could get, and take it gladly, a new attitude, it was remarked, in the conduct of recent German affairs. Hard would it have been—and even the "War Lord" recognized it now—had Germany been left to her fate, to be crushed gradually between the Slav and Latin on either side of her. But she was given a place among the Anglo-Saxons. The prodigal was admitted to the house, but the fatted calf was as well as ever the next morning. Even thus, it was well for the German. It seemed as if the old gods Thor and Woden, who had their birth where groups of skin-clad men, awaiting Cæsar, talked together in the glades of green German forests, had arisen to direct the affairs of Germany and force her into her rightful place among the nations.

But in the debates of the Congress, when shrewd and patriotic men representing the vanquished were striving eloquently for better terms, came to the surface speculations which were more than interesting. "Can you hold what you have won?" passionately declaimed the representative of France. "Did your vic-

tory really come upon the water, or from the sky? And who can monopolize the skies!"

All recognized, at heart, that his point was well taken. The statesmen and thinkers of the world were puzzling over the problem of whether or not human intelligence had newly devised such means for utilizing existent forces that former methods of warfare must be soon abandoned. In such event all the navies of the world were but costly things to be done away with; all the fortresses in the world were but as the mud pies built by children, and throughout the civilized world the greatest scientists and inventors were at work to determine whether or not what Appleton had accomplished clumsily could be done again elsewhere by Frenchman or Russian or Italian up to the same degree of accomplishment, or even better. Should the blue seas in all the future be traversed only by passenger and merchant craft? Should there be no strongholds defending the great cities and the great military highways of the nations, and which nation would have advantage in such case? That was the problem. It is the problem yet, though, in my opinion, nearly solved.

The Congress reached peaceable conclusion.

It had no alternative. As between England and the United States, they had friendly problems of their own. The spirit of their original alliance was maintained.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PRAIRIE AGAIN.

The bees were humming. I but know of it that the bees were humming and that I was wondering vaguely whether they liked better the red or the white clover. There I sat again in an easy chair upon the little porch of the building on the prairie whence went the Wild Goose to its flight above the blue eastern Atlantic and to its rest in the bottom of the ocean there. I hope it rests, as it deserves, upon the crumbling battlements of some fortress of the lost continent, Atlantis.

That day I was thinking of little save that I was very comfortable, that my cigar was good, and that a prominent official of the United States Signal Service was at work inside the old shed under the direction of a man named Appleton, with half a hundred men assisting him, including his immediate clerks, draughtsmen, and general helpers, with some of the cleverest young men of the army and navy.

That was the situation inside, and I, sorrowing for Appleton, was loafing outside. I, at least, was not under stress of labor and discipline to the extent that he was, though, correspondingly and properly, I was not the recipient of such favors as came to him. When the United States government ordered the new engine of destruction, which has already been named "The Valkyr," Appleton had chosen as his working place our old site on the prairie west of Chicago, and there the officers and men of the signal corps and the expert civilians engaged on the work were busy.

What the Valkyr could do when completed upon the lines laid out was now a matter of confidence to all of us. Appleton himself admitted, grumblingly, that he thought it was about right. Take the group of us there together and we felt and, furthermore we knew, that we were building a stanch and dirigible machine which, under ordinary circumstances, could and would carry up into the air a great load and drop portions of that load at any time, and, we felt confident, at any place, so sure were we of the means of steering the queer machine satisfactorily. We were the

mechanically celestial, and felt that we dominated or soon should dominate the terrestrial. That is the sort of people we were in the building on the prairie beside the stream which, in midsummer, when it isn't too low, has a sort of "Flow Gently Sweet Afton" way to it until it gets into the stream which seeks more swiftly and less quietly the way to the Mississippi, though, in passing, I may remark that neither stream would by its noise awaken the lightest sleeper.

What had happened after the great battle and the general adjudication following force of arms? Nothing. The nations had settled down, as farmers do, after the termination of a lawsuit determining boundary lines. There had been a settlement from which, for long, there could be no appeal and now the object of the races was growth in numbers and in power. There had come one of the breathing-places in history.

As for me, I was not thinking of such things. My reflections, when they wandered from the bees, became all sordid: "The mechanism of the butt of a great gun which cost thousands of dollars in its making," I

considered, "will soon be sold for only fourteen dollars and eighty cents, as old iron. Warships, even the submarine ones, are but old iron." Even the genius of men of thought and energy and patriotism, spent in devising ways of driving ships under water and thus succeed in destroying enemies floating upon the water had been largely wasted. Opposition to the law of gravitation rather than to that of flotation had won. "Warships," I considered, "will be quoted on the market, so many thousand dollars a warship, possibly, but doubtfully, available for commercial purposes, and so many pounds of turrets and big rifled guns will be worth so much in any market according to the quality of the iron of which they were constructed and of the sort of demand it is in for commercial ends."

And I was earnest in my thinking. I regret to say that among Appleton's engineering friends there are half a hundred men who expect to make fortunes under this extraordinary condition of things. I regret more mildly to say that I, also being human, seek a moderate fortune myself. I have mentally speculated in iron, or steel which has been tested

and tried under the keenest supervision of the keenest military experts of all the world. The price of iron even thus developed is liable to drop under the panic of a prospect of dynamite from more or less thousands of feet above. And so, being human, as already said, I have speculated and the one who shall be distantly referred to later in this chapter shall have clocks on her silk stockings.

And this brings me back, this allusion to "the eternal feminine," to Appleton's love story, which had been, like many another love story, interrupted by war. Appleton was now, on this day when I sat idling on our crazy little platform of a piazza—the new buildings of the new regime much interfering with my peaceful landscape—the husband of Helen, and you may be sure that Helen was not far distant. She was, in truth, but a mile or two away across the river, in the country house where the young people were spending the summer, and I knew that, before sunset, I should see her driving jauntily up and asking for "Mr. Appleton" with that air of unboasting but assured proprietorship which is so becoming and delicious in a young wife.

Furthermore, I knew that another woman, another newly made wife, she whose story is mine—and the story I am not going to tell—would call at the old barrack that afternoon and that, before we parted for the night, we four would stroll about the place, deserted then by workmen and tenanted only by its guards, and that we would talk and laugh there together in the waning day.

Now came our old friend Fitz to me as I sat in the shade, for Fitz had shamelessly deserted Helen for his former master when O'Brien came back from the wars.

"O'Brien," I called, for, without looking up, I knew that O'Brien was not far away, "Fitz does not look like the fighting dog you left behind you. He's been fed too much. I am afraid he's spoiled."

"Naw, sir!" emphatically replied O'Brien, "Youse can't spoil a bull-dog! Fitz ain't quite himself, but he'll be all right."

Fitz was looking interestedly toward the river, and as we had become great friends, the dog and I, we left O'Brien to his work and went away together to look for muskrat holes and oversee the affairs of nature generally.

"Fitz," said I to my companion, as we sauntered along over the scented carpet of the prairie, "it is my belief that despite my many goodly qualities, I am esteemed the least of all the beings who are gathered about the old building here, yourself included. It is only the engineer that counts just now. The man who isn't a mechanical genius, Fitz, is nowhere. He but cumbers the earth. It is true that in a perfunctory sort of a way, I have quite a status in the community. Appleton and his wife are affable with me—even my own wife goes as far as that occasionally—but then we are newly married—"

Fitz growled savagely, and darted toward a woodchuck hole, and no further conversation was possible with him at that time.

It was green and shady under the oaks, and I lay at full length on the short grass and woodland growth of flowers and weeds by the river. Turning after awhile toward a mass of hazel brush through which the swish and rustle told some one was coming, I saw, rising above the lower bushes, a round red face. It looked like the full moon of harvest, and was as promising and cheery. At my call, the face

advanced again and the blue-cotton clad figure of Old Swanson's daughter emerged from the greenery. She came along cheerily, the fair Leda, with a glance of recognition at the doubtful Fitz, and I rose to shake her work-hardened hand.

All of the Swanson sons had returned from their soldiering save one, and he had died in camp, where the great armies of America had awaited the signal for grim war on land, which, happily, never came.

"And how about Frederickson?" I asked, without fear, for I knew nothing could have happened to the Amazon's lover, so jolly and full of content was her presence.

A scarlet wave swept over the already sufficiently florid face of the Swedish girl and she half turned away:

"Oh, Frederickson, he's all right!"

Then after a pause she continued, "I hear that you was married already, Mr. Wentworth. I wish you joy."

The hearty, old fashioned words of congratulation went straight to the place they were aimed at. Again I shook the girl's hand, and she walked quickly along the path by the river, humming an old tune, and disappeared.

Fitz toiled long and earnestly at the woodchuck hole, and the clover blossoms about were buried beneath the upflung sandy soil in which he dug, while I looked on with languid interest in the proceeding. After all I had seen and undergone, and knowing what I did of the work in progress, but one subject could ordinarily be uppermost in my mind, the gigantic results of the change in war methods I knew to be impending. I thought of Appleton again in the role of a warrior. I thought that if the almost inconceivable should some day happen and men should dare to battle in the skies, the Valkyr would surely be the battleship of one aerial squadron, and that the name of Appleton would outlast the names of most generals and admirals. Thinking, devising, planning, wrestling of mind, these have their enduring triumphs in war and in peace.

But Appleton says that this triumph of war can never be, ought not to be, and shall not be, even though he is working hard to perfect a death-dealing machine, destructive beyond all others ever invented. This is what Appleton said to me that day, later on, when the woman who has not been named and I were talking with him and his wife:

"Civilization has reached a point where war is suicide. When one hundred thousand men meet another one hundred thousand men and the only possible sequence of their meeting means that one hundred thousand of the two hundred thousand men must be slain, there isn't going to be any fighting. If there be any such thing as religion or a future, it must be wrong. If there be any such thing as a regard for personal safety, it must be wrong. The chances in war will be, at the best, less than one in two for safety to the individual. Never in any battle fought in all the history of the world have the bravest of all the men of the world faced such dreadful chance. They could not unless they were fools.

"War, suppose it conceivable under the coming conditions, must be but a gamble; it must be but dice thrown in the air. A little accident and the army fighting for the right or the army fighting for the wrong will have disappeared. Both armies may disappear together.

"The time of powder and ball has gone by. In war, already, tons of high explosives are hurled, and every mechanical device of man in his greatest development of control over na-

ture is employed in this manner to destroy human lives. When aerial warfare is added, the end will have come. Think of this one feature: The Emperor in his palace, the Parliament or Congress within its doors, will be attacked. There can be no safety for anyone, and the heads of nations will hesitate before they declare war. A king's crown will then be in as much peril as the helmet of the private soldier. It will be as easy—has been as easy—to sink a battleship in all its glory at sea as to sink a rowboat on a placid river."

The voice of Helen broke in after a minute's silence.

"Why do we make these killing machines then, if they are not to be used?"

"The armies and navies of Europe preserved the peace of Europe for years during the latter half of the nineteenth century," replied Appleton. "The menace of fatal war must preserve alive, as it has heretofore, many a nation, and keep it in peace. To have a world at peace there must be massed in the controlling nations such power of destruction as may not be even questioned. So we shall build our appliances of destruction, calling to our aid every discovery and achievement of science.

When there are but chances about war, when it means death to all, or the vast majority of all who engage in it, there will be peace."

Appleton paused for a moment, and the two women looked at each other, half protesting, but half understanding, too. And Appleton said, earnestly and quietly:

"There shall be no more war."

THE END